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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

POLITICS IN BRANDON CITY, 1899 - 1949

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Politics in Brandon City, 1899 - 1949" submitted by Walter Leland Rutherford Clark in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Charles Wayland Lightbody, an inspiring teacher who awakened in many students an unknown love for history and a desire to strive for what previously had been perceived to be "the unattainable."

ABSTRACT

Brandon, in 1899, was represented in both the Manitoba Legislature and in the House of Commons by a member of the government. That was equally true in 1949. Furthermore, when one examines the results of the thirty-one provincial and federal elections in which Brandon voters participated during the 1899-1949 era, it becomes immediately evident that Brandon voters most frequently elected a candidate who proved to be "on the winning side." In fact, "opposition" members were elected on only six occasions. Whether Brandon voters were simply "in step" with public opinion throughout much of this period or whether they were consciously seeking to vote "ministerialist" in their community's self-interest is one of several questions to be considered.

The underlying assumption in the study of the political process in this single community (which constituted, but for a minor degree, the provincial constituency of Brandon, initially Brandon City) from 1899 to 1949 is that there are significant "local" factors which influence--or even determine--the electoral results. Consequently, the political history of this rather minute area has been thoroughly analyzed to discover whether such "local" factors exist--and to evaluate their significance. To determine the degree of inter-relationship, if any, that exists between the three "levels" of politics--i.e., municipal, provincial and federal--has also been an integral part of this examination. To what extent was a constituency such as Brandon City a political unit unto itself? To what degree did the political process at the municipal, provincial and federal level correspond, vary or inter-relate with the others?

As a result of this study, several tentative conclusions have been reached. While Brandon does appear to be a part of a larger political

"whole" on many occasions--when its voters seem to respond essentially as electors elsewhere are reacting and presumably for similar reasons, a considerable number of "local" political factors are also in evidence. For example, the personal appeal of individual candidates (irrespective of party affiliation), the influence of a local daily newspaper, local economic conditions, the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the local constituency's "get out the vote" campaign, the lack of unity within local party ranks, and the coalescence of certain political forces in response to a particularly offensive (i.e., radical) opponent are factors which (on occasions) have obviously been significant--and even determinant. In addition, an analysis of "Politics in Brandon City, 1899-1949" does demonstrate that frequently there was a strong inter-relationship between political developments at one "level" and another--an inter-relationship that was not, however, necessarily positive in nature. Consequently, one can conclude that Brandon was sufficiently a political unit unto itself from 1899 to 1949 that one would risk ignoring (on occasions) the essence of politics if one were to ignore such local factors.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this study marks the fulfillment of a personal "dream" which was "born" many years ago when the author was an undergraduate student at the University of Saskatchewan. That "dream" has become a reality only with the invaluable assistance of many individuals and institutions. Without a "study leave" provided by Brandon University, graduate scholarships and teaching assistantships provided by the University of Alberta, and the research assistance provided by the John S. Ewart Memorial Fund, this goal would have been unattainable. Without the sacrifice and constant encouragement of my family--who have "lived" with this thesis for the past five years, the requirements could never have been met.

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W. Leland Clark

Brandon University
July 9, 1976

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Chapter I

The Setting

According to Henderson's necessarily abbreviated description, Brandon, Manitoba, on the eve of the twentieth century, was a rather typical small rural market centre-railway town. This community of some 5,000 was Manitoba's second city, in terms of size, development and importance. Its streets were well graded. Its waterworks were municipally owned (a mark of progress in that new era of "gas and water socialism"). It had an efficient fire department, equipped with two steam fire engines. The city had a number of public schools, a Roman Catholic convent and several churches. Brandon was "located in one of the finest agricultural sections in Manitoba,"[1] and, as a result, the community had become widely known--for many years--as the "Wheat City." There were, as one would expect, grain elevators and grist mills. Several saw and planing mills were located on the banks of the Assiniboine River as evidence of the fact that the city had its own "timber" industry. Brandon, as the "centre" of western Manitoba, was also the seat of the Western Judicial District court house and the location of a provincial jail. Finally, and what was potentially of great importance to this growing community, Brandon, in addition to being the eastern terminus for the G.N.W. Central and the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railway, was a divisional point for the C.P.R.[2] As such, Brandon had many of the characteristics of a new western city whose future, at that moment, was both exciting and uncertain.

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1. Henderson's Manitoba and Northwest Territories Directory, 1897

2. Ibid.

The history of Brandon's "instantaneous" growth had, however, been somewhat unique. In the spring of 1881, General Rosser, on behalf of the C.P.R., had decided to establish Brandon approximately two miles west of the site of Grand Valley and on the south, rather than on the north, side of the flooding Assiniboine River.[3] For a few summer weeks, the site of this future city was marked only by tents. However, thanks (in part) to the entrepreneurial efforts of Chas. Whitehead who imported the first boatload of lumber from Winnipeg (and whose family subsequently became most prominent in this new city), Brandon was soon well established with temporary wooden structures which housed the many necessary "services" which the rapidly expanding market centre required. The arrival of the first C.P.R. train in September 1881 resulted in an almost immediate reduction in freight rates by 50% and the subsequent disappearance of the steam boat industry on the Assiniboine River. This new divisional centre for the C.P.R. became an "instant city" in 1882 and the principal market centre for the southwestern Manitoban wheat industry--until the alternative of local rural grain elevators were constructed later in the decade. By 1885--the year of the rebellion[4]--Brandon, with a population of 2,348,[5] had many of the characteristics of a new, thriving community. Many new "service" businesses had been established: an emerging manufacturing industry--

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3. Pierre Berton, The Last Spike (Toronto 1971), 23-32

4. Pioneer accounts later referred to the "Indian scare" of 1885 and fearful Brandonites looked to their own defenses by organizing a Home Guard under the command of Mayor James Smart. Brandon Daily Sun, July 24, 1905

5. Census of Manitoba, 1885-1886

as typified by John Hanbury's lumber mill[6] and a flour mill[7] (each of which had commenced operation in 1881)--was evident; branches of two "eastern" banks--the Merchants and the Imperial--had been in operation since 1882;[8] two schools (at least)--the "old Central" or "10th St." and St. Michael's Catholic--had been founded;[9] while Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist and Roman Catholic churches attested to the development of this new community.[10] In the following year, Manitoba's "second city" was honoured by a visit from Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. The record wheat crops of 1887 and the inability of the C.P.R. to move that harvest to eastern markets resulted in the great "grain blockade" as typified in the long lines of farmers from all over western Manitoba who waited impatiently in Brandon on Pacific Avenue to sell their wagon loads of wheat. As a result, Brandon thereafter was widely known as the "Wheat City."[11]

By the late 1880s, the "boom" had been succeeded by the years of the "hard times"--the years of disappointed speculators, early frosts, increased freight rates and lower wheat prices. Nevertheless,

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[6] John Hanbury's "timber" empire grew quickly to become Brandon's largest locally-owned industry and his Brandon operation employed, at the turn of the century, from 100 to 300 men the year round. Brandon Daily Sun, July 24, 1905. As a result Hanbury was second only to the C.P.R. as the community's largest employer. He, himself, noted during the 1903 mayoralty election that he paid $150-$300 a day in wages. Ibid., January 31, 1903

[7] That flour mill's capacity had been expanded in 1885 to 250 barrels per day. Ibid., November 1, 1912

[8] Ibid., July 20, 1907

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., July 24, 1905

Brandon's population, according to the 1891 census, had reached 3,778[12] while the community's thirty-nine manufacturing establishments (with a capital investment of $378,505) employed 267 "hands"; paid $136,400 in wages; and produced $733,800 worth of goods.[13] In the meantime, important new improvements were being made in the city: the Brandon Electric Light Co., which had been in operation since 1888, opened its new 10th St. plant (with a 300% increase in capacity) in 1890;[14] the Dominion Experimental Farm which had been founded in 1888 by Professor S.A. Bedford, its first superintendent, was already a city "showpiece"; the "new" General Hospital had been occupied in 1892 after the initial quarters had proved to be inadequate;[15] while far from least, Henry L. Patmore (later Alderman Patmore), who had purchased the nursery in 1889 which would make the family name famous throughout Western Canada, launched the tree planting campaign which would later enable Brandon "boosters" to claim that their community "is undoubtedly the most beautiful city in the Canadian Northwest."[16]

Although the city's economic growth was not constant, as indicated by the fact that Brandon's manufacturing industry produced less and paid

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12. Census of Canada, 1890-1, vol. 1

13. Ibid., vol. 4

14. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907

15. Ibid., November 1, 1912

16. Ibid.

out less in wages in 1900 than it did in 1890,[17] the foundation for a relatively well diversified local economy had been laid on the eve of the twentieth century. While Brandon reportedly was viewed in the 1880s and much of the 1890s "merely as a wholesale dependence resting upon the trade of the surrounding country,"[18] the city--by 1900--was becoming a manufacturing and railway centre of considerable proportions. Certainly Brandon's commercial character was still most evident--both in the number of businesses and in the extent of the territory which they served.[19] Thus, the numerous drugstores, department stores (of which there were four), liveries, transfer and fuel companies, clothing stores, jewellers, insurance agencies, book stores, the ten hotels, the creameries, the hardwares, the contracting firms, the real estate dealers and the "loan" companies were presumably an integral part of any "market centre." However, the number of businesses, such as A.E. McKenzie's Seed Co. (which was founded in 1897), E.L. Christie's Book Store,[20] Adams

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17. The value of manufactured produce declined from $733,800 to 541,327 while total wages paid was reduced to $92,959 from $136,400. In addition, the number of manufacturing establishments dropped to 12 from 39. However, total capital investment of such concerns was increased from $378,505 to $595,662 and the number of persons employed was now 287, as contrasted with 267. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 3. While the number of manufacturing firms had decreased, those that remained in operation were obviously larger.

18. Brandon Daily Sun, November 1, 1912

19. For instance, a "booster issue" of the Brandon Daily Sun in 1912 claimed that Brandon's "market area" extended west almost to Regina. Ibid.

20. E.L. Christie bought the business in 1885 and he subsequently "furnished" most of the schools on the prairies. In addition, E.L. Christie later became president of the Brandon Electric Light Co. Ibid.

Shoe Co.,[21] and Wilson, Rankin and Co.,[22] which did business throughout all of Western Canada suggests that Brandon, by 1900, had already developed from a traditional small market centre into a diversified sub-metropolitan economy. The fact that Brandon had become the "leading horse trading centre in the West"[23] further attests to the city's economic significance in this western region. However, it was the city's growth as a manufacturing centre that was the most dramatic development to date. The list of locally manufactured products was surprisingly lengthy: lumber and building materials; office and hotel fixtures; men's and women's clothing; agricultural implements (not identified); gasoline engines; steam boilers; monuments and headstones; cigars; flour and oatmeal; millinery and waggons [sic]; fire engines, tents; awnings and mattresses; windmills; iron mouldings; upholstered work; signs; ale, beer and soft drinks; books and stationary; tinwork; boots and shoes; medicines; clay sand and lime bricks; cement blocks; harness; sewer pipes; breads and, finally, cakes![24] However, the Western Sun, in 1897, had editorialized that the key to Brandon's future development depended upon her ability to develop as a transportation centre: "Unless steps are taken to render the enormous undeveloped resources of the north tributary to our city, it is doomed to remain a country town."[25] By 1900, the C.P.R.--which was already the city's largest employer--was on the verge of considerable expansion[26] and the old Northern Pacific railway (which connected Brandon with Winnipeg via Wawanesa) was soon (in 1901) to become part of a rapidly expanding Canadian Northern system. Brandon, it would appear, had a growing--and exciting--economic future!

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[21] Travellers for the Adams Shoe Co. represented the Brandon firm in the North-West Territories. The Western Sun, December 30, 1897

[22] The Wilson, Rankin and Co. department store even published a fall catalogue for distribution throughout western Manitoba and "the Territories." Ibid.

[23] While several firms were engaged in this business, Trotter and Trotter estimated that they alone had imported horses valued in excess of one million dollars into the Brandon district. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907

[24] Ibid.~~, July 20, 1907~~

For the moment, however, there were disturbing signs of economic weakness that would have to be overcome. While the city's population had escalated sharply in the 1890s--from 3,778 in 1891 to 5,620 in 1901 (a 48.76% increase)[27]--due to the new wave of European immigrants, the last years of that decade had been most disappointing in some respects. For example, the number of eligible voters had actually declined from 1,996 in 1898 to 1,789 in 1900,[28] and, in addition, the city was incurring financial difficulties with its creditors.[29] While Mayor E. Evans explained that unexpected civic expenditures--such as essential bridge and city hall repairs--accounted for the city's deficit,[30] critics contended that property assessments and local

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25. The Western Sun, December 30, 1897

26. By 1907, Brandon would be publicized as a "railway centre" and the C.P.R. would, at that stage, have 600 persons on the company payroll. The C.P.R. itself had twelve passenger and fifteen freight trains a day passing through Brandon! Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907

27. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 3

28. Independence, August 23, 1900. The recovery would commence in 1902 with 1,820 voters listed. By 1903, there were 1,984 voters enfranchised. Brandon Daily Sun, September 20, 1905

29. The Imperial Bank had initiated legal proceedings against the city in late 1898 when Brandon had failed to fulfill its obligations. By mid 1899, bondholders were reportedly filing suit against the city for non-payment of interest. Independence, July 6, 1899

30. The Independent, December 15, 1898

taxation rates were excessively high[31] and that local property was simply being abandoned.[32] Consequently, local taxation revenues had declined sharply. Whatever the reason, the City of Brandon was in a seemingly serious deficit situation--at that very moment when its long term future looked so bright.

While the city's economy was undergoing significant changes in the late 19th century, the "character" of the community remained relatively constant. The city had begun--in a very real sense--as an "outpost" of Ontario, as evidenced by the fact that 51.87% of Brandon residents, as of 1885, had been born in Ontario while an additional 22.66% had been born in Great Britain.[33] According to the 1901 census returns, 33.56% of Brandon residents were of English origin; 23.29% were of Irish origin; and 26.01% were of Scotch descent. The number of Brandonites of European origin were miniscule in comparison: 222 or 3.95% were of German origin; 152 or 2.70% were of Scandinavian descent; 71 or 1.26% were of Russianorigin; while only 62 or 1.10%

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31. Tax rates, which had fluctuated widely in the 1890s, rose sharply at the end of the decade: 1890-18 mills; 1891-19.5 mills; 1892-22.4 mills; 1893-23.4 mills; 1894-18 mills; 1895-15.5 mills; 1896-17.9 mills; 1897-20 mills; 1898-25 mills plus a 1/2 mill extra for water rates. Ibid., November 24, 1898

32. One Brandon newspaper stated that "property assessed for $6,500 is to be sold for $1500 cash" and that there were now numerous "cellar holes on 6th Street and Pacific where houses and hotels formerly stood...." Ibid. Later, this same newspaper reported that there were 1232 lots available in the city's tax sale and the 739 of those lots sold for $5026. Ibid., May 31, 1900

33. Only a miniscule .64% had been born in Europe. Census of Manitoba, 1885-86

were of French origin.[34] As only 432 Brandonites (or 7.69%) were Roman Catholic, the vast majority were obviously Protestant. Of that group, the Presbyterians were most numerous (with 28.63%); the Methodists were second (with 22.6%); the Anglicans were a near third (with 21.49%); while the Baptists constituted 8.47%.[35] Thus, Brandon's character as a WASP community had not been altered significantly since the city's inception. In fact, the most evident change to that point may well have been in the fact that the city's population was, as one might expect, growing slightly older![36]

Life for these 5,000 plus Brandonites, at the end of the 19th century was rather pleasantly peaceful. While the citizens could partake of

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34. There were four negroes, thirteen Chinese or Japanese, eleven Indians and one half-breed residing in Brandon. Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1. However, it should be noted that a majority of these residents had actually been born in Canada. Although exact figures for the City of Brandon are unavailable, 78.19% of the population of the federal constituency of Brandon were born in Canada: in fact, 42% of that total population were Ontario born while a large 32.01% were native Manitoban. Ibid. The foreign born population was somewhat on the increase. Only 2.60% of Brandon residents in 1885 were "foreign born" (Census of Manitoba, 1885-86) while 5.11% of the Brandon federal constituency were thus designated in 1901. The American component, however, was quite constant: 1.96% of Brandon residents in 1885-86 had been born in the U.S.A. and 1.95% of the residents of the Brandon federal constituency in 1901 were American born.

35. Census of Canada, 1901. Several other denominations were represented in Brandon by less than one hundred members. The Lutherans, with ninety-four adherents (or 1.67%), were the largest of these several groups. It is also interesting to note that these same religious faiths were represented in Brandon in 1885 in the same "order." Census of Manitoba, 1885-86

36. The pattern of the "aging" community is interesting to observe, although the unavailability of some statistics make the comparison somewhat incomplete. However, while only 1.79% of Brandonites were sixty years of age or older in 1885 (Census of Manitoba, 1885-86) that age group had grown to 3.96% of the city's population at the time of the 1916 prairies census. Thirty years later, 16.47% of Brandon's residents would be sixty years of age, or older. Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 1

the numerous cultural and recreational activities (many of which were provided by Brandon's own College after 1899)[37] which most pioneer societies enjoyed, the community did have some characteristics of the frontier. For example, the Independence noted that "several gangs of river and bush men"[38] participated in the week-long celebration which followed Lord Roberts' entrance into Pretoria in June 1900, and, on a later occasion, the same newspaper reported that "east end brothels have taken up a considerable portion of Magistrate Campbell's attention this week."[39] However, despite the facilities offered by the city's ten hotels and the stimulus provided by the "victory" in South Africa, this newspaper--which, significantly, was opposing the efforts of local prohibitionists--concluded that "Brandon is such a quiet town."[40] As a result, the city's social problems were limited--at the end of the 19th century--to the traditional ones of prostitution and "alcoholism." Those two "social" problems, however, could certainly be both economically and politically significant.

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[37] The history of Brandon College is an interesting example of the significance of the railway to the growth of Western Canada. Prairie College and its successor McKee's Academy had been originally established in Rapid City on the assumption that the CPR was to follow a more north-westerly route. The decision in favour of the southern route meant the demise of Rapid City, the growth of Brandon and the subsequent re-location of McKee's Academy in this rapidly growing city. In 1899, the Baptist Convention of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories decided to establish a Baptist College in Brandon and McKee's Academy was absorbed by the new institution. C.G. Stone and F. Joan Garnett, Brandon College: A History, 1899-1967 (Brandon 1969), 5-15

[38] Independence, June 7, 1900

[39] Ibid., June 28, 1900

[40] Ibid., June 7, 1900

Brandon's local government, which had to struggle with these and other civic problems, consisted in the 1890s of a mayor (elected annually by the voters at large) and eight aldermen who represented one of the city's four wards for a two year term.[41] While each ward originally had been represented by three aldermen,[42] that number had been reduced to two representatives per ward in 1886. Brandon's current mayor and council, as generally had been the case since Brandon's inception as a city in 1882,[43] were prominent business and professional men who ostensibly served free of any "party" or "special interest" ties.[44] While the civic financial crisis of 1898 had resulted in the formation of a "Citizens' Committee" and the endorsation of a slate of civic candidates for that 1898 municipal election, municipal politics, on the eve of the 20th century, was essentially the "politics of the individual" although those "individuals" proved normally to be WASP commercial businessmen or self-employed professional men! They were, nevertheless, broadly representative of the community to which they belonged.

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[41] See appendix one.

[42] The fifth ward was added in 1905.

[43] For example, Dr. John McDiarmid, who served as mayor in 1892, 1893, 1899 and again in 1900 was a medical doctor; A.C. Fraser, mayor in 1888-89 (and subsequently in 1901-2), owned a large "dry goods" store; James A. Smart, mayor for 1885-86, was in the hardware business; T. Mayne Daly, Brandon's first mayor in 1882 who served again in 1884, was also the city's first lawyer; E. Evans, mayor for 1897-98, was a "private" banker; while Andrew Kelly mayor for 1890-91, was president of Adams Bros & Harness Co.

[44] However, a remarkable number of Brandon's mayors later became candidates for political office. T. Mayne Daly was first elected M.P. for Selkirk in 1887 and subsequently served as Minister of the Interior from 1891 to 1896. James A. Smart, who was only twenty-seven years old when he became mayor, was elected as M.P.P. for North Brandon in 1886; he later was appointed Deputy Minister of the Interior. Charles Adams, who was elected mayor at age thirty, was elected M.P.P. for Brandon City in 1896, the same year in which A.C. Fraser was elected M.P.P. for North Brandon. It is interesting to note that all of these men, with the exception of T. Mayne Daly, were Liberals.

The nine square miles (or 5,760 acres) which comprised the City of Brandon also constituted (essentially) the provincial constituency of Brandon City or Brandon as it more frequently was known.[45] That provincial constituency, in turn, constituted a part initially of the Selkirk federal constituency, and, as of the 1896 general election, the Brandon federal constituency. As a result, Brandon residents elected their own representative to the Manitoba legislative assembly and they had an important voice (as they traditionally constituted approximately 40% of the federal constituency's electorate) in the selection of the area's Member of Parliament. These elections, of course, were openly "political" or "partisan" in contrast to the municipal system where allegedly non-partisan "individuals" predominated.

A cursory examination of the results of those elections would suggest that Brandon had developed into a Liberal "strong-hold" by 1899. For example, in provincial politics Liberal politicians, with minor exceptions, succeeded each other as M.P.P. for Brandon.[46] The honour initially went to J.W. Sifton, Clifford Sifton's father and a former Speaker of the Manitoba legislative assembly. While a Conservative, J.E. Woodworth, won in 1883, James Smart, one of Brandon's youngest mayors, recovered the constituency on behalf of the Liberals first in the inconclusive 1886 general election[47] and again in 1888 when the Liberals gained power provincially. As Smart became Minister of Public Works in the Greenway ministry, Brandon City was represented in the provincial cabinet—a position which its citizens would frequently claim as a natural "right" for Manitoba's "second" city. By electing Chas. Adams, another Liberal and one of Clifford Sifton's closest political associates, Brandon voters in 1894 ensured that they would still be represented on the government side of the house—even though the city's new M.P.P. was not appointed to the cabinet.

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[45] Except for 1886 when the city and surrounding area was divided into West Brandon and East Brandon, the provincial constituency consisted of township 10, range 19 west--of which the City of Brandon comprised one-quarter of the area but virtually all of the population.

[46] Members of the Manitoba legislative assembly were generally identified as M.P.P.'s rather than M.L.A.'s until the Great War era.

A somewhat similar pattern was evident in federal politics. While T. Mayne Daly, Brandon's first mayor and a Conservative, had succeeded the Liberal Hugh Sutherland to become the M.P. for Selkirk (and, thus, Brandon's representative) from 1887 to 1896, Clifford Sifton, Manitoba's former Attorney-General, was elected M.P. for Brandon (by acclamation) in a late 1896 by-election after D'Alton McCarthy, the "renegade" Conservative (who had won the seat in the 1896 general election as an Independent), had chosen to sit for North Simcoe where he had also been successful. The Liberals, of course, had won that general election and Brandon's new M.P., as Minister of the Interior (the position which Daly had also held), became Western Canada's most powerful Liberal. Thus, Brandon voters, in addition to electing several Liberals, had displayed an apparent tendency, by 1899, to vote "ministerialist"—i.e., to vote "in step" with the majority of provincial or federal electors (as the case might be).

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[47] In 1886, J.A. Smart won the East Brandon riding while J.N. Kirchoffer (later Senator Kirchoffer) defeated J.W. Sifton in West Brandon. In 1888, Smart ran successfully in the re-organized Brandon City constituency.

However, whether or not there was any such "pattern" to local voting habits was only one of several questions which would be of interest to a student of politics. Who were the politicians that were successful? What qualities did they possess as candidates? Why were they elected? Were there any real differences in "politics" between the three "levels" of political activity? What degree of interrelationship was there (if any) between these three "levels" of politics? Were the results in this single constituency of Brandon significantly different from the political system as a whole and if so, why? Hopefully, the answer to these questions--as well as a greater awareness of the nature of twentieth century politics in this single constituency--can be found by an intensive analysis of "Politics In Brandon City, 1899-1949."

Chapter II

Politics in "Siftonian"Brandon: 1899-1905

Brandonites, in early 1899, were on the eve of two general elections. They were also about to enter the twentieth century, a century which Laurier had proclaimed to be "Canada's" and a century whose first few years at least proved to be good for Brandon. While concerned citizens (and the city's equally worried bankers) had devoted much of their attention to the problem of Brandon's alarming financial position in the late 1890s, the community's economic picture was dramatically reversed during the next few years. Whereas commentators in the late 1890s had focused on empty lots and gaping cellars, the early 1900s--which were characterized by increases in population and productivity--were a marked and welcome contrast.

In fact, Brandon grew rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century--in those years that constituted the latter portion of Clifford Sifton's term as Minister of Interior. This community of approximately 5,000 at the turn of the century had virtually doubled to become a city of 10,408 by the time of the 1906 census returns.[1] One of the results of this enormous increase in Brandon's population was a corresponding increase in civic electors: thus, the pattern of decline which had been notable until 1901 when there had been only 1,785 voters was reversed. Brandon had 2,453 voters in 1905 and council responded by establishing the fifth ward which comprised that area south of Victoria Avenue.[2]

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[1] The population had been 5,670 at the time of the 1901 census return. Census of Prairie Provinces, 1906

[2] See Appendix two.

The growth in manufacturing productivity was even more dramatic as it rose some 300% from $541,327 in 1901 to $2,007,995 in 1906.[3] A probable factor in the growth of manufacturing within Brandon was the development of Brandon as a railway centre. The 1903 decision of the C.P.R. to spend one-quarter of a million dollars in the construction of new facilities in Brandon meant, as the Sun editorialized, "that Brandon is to be a railway centre."[4] In any event, the growth which began in 1901 was dramatic: thus, by 1902, a new twine factory and a flour mill had opened; two more banks had located in the city; and the volume of freight handled by the C.P.R. had doubled from that of the previous year. In 1903, the C.P.R. announced their major expansion; the new Empire Brewery, which employed thirty-five people, was opened;[5] and the Singer Manufacturing Company announced their decision to establish a distribution centre for its famous sewing machines in Brandon, identical to the facilities currently existing in Winnipeg.[6] The pattern continued in 1904 as two hundred and fifty buildings were reportedly erected in that year alone.[7] The city, which had seemed to be faced with financial disaster in the late 1890s, now looked forward to a promising future. In fact, one seemingly over-optimistic traveller predicted in 1904 that Brandon would reach the 10,000 mark "within two years."[8] The 1906 census returns were to prove him to be an accurate prophet! Thus, the growth from 1901 onward was both constant and remarkable. There were some observers who believed that some—although not all—politicians should share in the credit for that "heady" success.[9]

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[3] The value of manufacturing in Brandon in 1905 exceeded that of Fort William, Regina and Edmonton. Brandon Daily Sun, July 20, 1907

[4] Ibid., March 9, 1903

[5] The Sun, in what was significantly identified as a "booster" edition, contended that the Empire Brewery served the needs (?!) of most of Western Canada. Ibid., November 1, 1912

[6] Ibid., March 28, 1903

[7] The Brandon Weekly Sun, October 13, 1904

[8] Ibid., July 12, 1904

Brandon, in early 1899, appeared to be a Liberal stronghold or, in a sense, Clifford Sifton's political fiefdom. Two prominent Brandon Liberals, Chas. Adams and A.C. Fraser, represented the constituencies of Brandon City and North Brandon respectively in the Manitoba Legislature while their close friend and the former M.P.P. for North Brandon, Clifford Sifton, was so predominant in all facets of politics—local, provincial and federal—that politics in Brandon (and, in fact, in much of Western Canada) could, for several years, be legitimately described as "the politics of Clifford Sifton."

The Sifton family had moved to Manitoba from Ontario in 1865 and J.W. Sifton, Clifford Sifton's father, was soon deeply involved in railway construction, farming and politics: in fact, he served briefly as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1879. In 1881, the elder Sifton commenced a large farming operation in the Brandon area and he subsequently had the honour to be elected the area's first M.P.P. after Manitoba's boundaries were extended westward in 1881.

Therefore, when young Clifford Sifton moved to Brandon in 1882 to commence the practice of law, the family name was already well established in that community. Sifton immediately became active in his own right in the Methodist Church, in the temperance movement, and in his father's political activities. In 1888, Clifford Sifton, who was then twenty-seven years old, ran successfully in the provincial constituency of North Brandon against W.A. Macdonald, a promising young lawyer whom many had believed was destined to become the future Conservative leader.[10]

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[9] The pro-Liberal Sun noted that this growth had occurred during Sifton's era. The Conservatives admittedly had constructed the Post Office and the Experimental Farm but these facilities did not bring wealth into the community: "What is a public building to the common people of a city, compared with wise business like administration of the country's affairs, which puts money into everybody's pocket and gives to every elector an air of confidence...." Ibid., October 27, 1904

Although the Liberals won the 1888 election with considerable ease, the caucus soon was severely divided on the question of railway development. The proponents of a more ambitious railway building programme had assumed that they would receive the support of the new member for North Brandon in their struggle with Premier Greenway and Joseph Martin, the principal advocates of a more "conservative" policy. Instead, young Clifford Sifton surprised many of his colleagues by emerging as an active and effective defender of Greenway's position. Consequently, when the "expansionist" element of caucus failed to carry their proposal (and to oust Greenway as may have been their intention), they largely blamed Clifford Sifton for their failure. Sifton had made the first of what would prove to be many political enemies.[11] Sifton, meanwhile, emerged, within the next two to three years, as one of the government's strongest members. He was a strong supporter of the Greenway ministry's decision to abolish French as an official language and to establish a "National School" system. Consequently, when Joseph Martin's frequently tendered resignation was (to Martin's surprise) accepted in 1891, North Brandon's thirty-one year old M.P.P. was the natural successor to the post of Attorney-

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[10] J.W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times (Toronto 1931), 4

[11] Ibid., 23

General.[12] It now became Sifton's responsibility to defend his government's controversial school policy in the many court and political tests that lay ahead. The new Attorney-General, with his relentless drive, was the "chief campaigner" in the government's successful 1892 provincial election:[13] he also "master-minded" the next Liberal victory in January 1896.[14] As a result, Sifton had become a national political figure even before he entered federal politics.

Laurier, immediately upon the conclusion of the 1896 election, invited Manitoba's Attorney-General to become the Minister of Interior. Sifton, however, insisted that the schools question must first be resolved to the satisfaction of the Brandon area Liberals. Therefore, after those terms had been met, this thirty-five year old young man entered the Laurier government as the Minister of the Interior on November 18, 1896. He was subsequently elected as M.P. for Brandon on December 4, 1896, by acclamation.[15]

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[12] As a result, the Martin "forces" in the Manitoba Liberal party were, hereafter, bitterly opposed to C. Sifton and the fact that Sifton, not Martin, was chosen to be Minister of Interior in 1896 only added to the internal party conflict that existed. This was the view of a Toronto Globe editorial which was reprinted in a local (and pro-Liberal) newspaper. Brandon Daily Sun, July 14, 1900

[13] Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, 46

[14] Ibid., 47

[15] D'Alton McCarthy, who had played a significant (albeit undetermined) role both in the "origin" of the Manitoba Schools Question and in the ensuing struggle, had been elected in Brandon in 1896 as an Independent. He had, in addition, been a successful candidate in North Simcoe. His decision to resign the Brandon seat meant that it was now available for Sifton who had campaigned quite strenuously on McCarthy's behalf during the general election. It should, however, be noted the most recent study of Sifton concludes that there is no evidence to indicate that McCarthy had been a "stand-in" for Sifton in Brandon. David J. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Toronto, 1973), 92

The new Minister's responsibilities were immense. As Western Canada's sole representative in the cabinet, he was responsible for the allocation of patronage and for the political management of that rapidly expanding region. The fact that Sifton, as Minister of the Interior, was also responsible for the administration of the Yukon during the tumultuous years of the gold rush greatly augmented his political power in that the opportunities for political patronage became seemingly unlimited for a brief period of time. In addition, Sifton, as Minister of the Interior, was also responsible for the development of the West, for the immigration policies which could further that development, and, as a result, for the formation of what might prove to be a new Western Canadian identity. However, to be the possessor of such enormous political power was also to incur considerable political risk.

The Minister of Interior was certainly very conscious of the fact that it was, at best, a mixed blessing to be placed in control of patronage. There were, predictably, far more applicants for the well-paying positions than there were jobs available and, thus, several enemies could be made for every friend that was gained! For example, Sifton contended that Joseph Martin and R.L. Richardson,[16] owner of the Winnipeg Daily Tribune, were his political enemies owing to the fact that he was not one of the boys, and he had not met their every wish.[17] On the other hand, there was often a shortage of qualified applicants for the lower salaried positions and the Minister could easily be embarrassed by the appointment of an incompetent candidate. Finally, there was a rather widespread belief that all the Tories should have been "purged" as soon as Laurier came to office in 1896 and Sifton, as the local member, would have to accept political responsibility for any Liberal disenchantment that remained. For example, the fact that a Brandon blacksmith, who was a "violent Orangeman and was always determinedly opposed to our Party,"[18] was still receiving some of the Experimental Farm business caused "a lot of Liberals" to declare that they would vote against Sifton in the next election.

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[16] R.L. Richardson would oppose Sifton unsuccessfully in Brandon in the 1904 federal election.

[17] Public Archives of Canada (PAC), C. Sifton Papers, vol. 232, 4290431, Sifton to J.S. Willison, May 10, 1899. This would seem to be an over-simplified explanation in this instance.

The fact that Sifton, as Minister of Interior, was also responsible for the implementation of Canada's immigration policies could also be politically significant--for Sifton himself, his government and those with whom he was politically associated. Sifton's decision to encourage the immigration of East Europeans--the "peasants in sheep-skin's clothing"--was politically dangerous for several reasons. For example, the local labour community was disturbed by the prospect of competitive "cheap" labour as indicated by Chas. Adams, Brandon's M.P.P., who reported

> some dissatisfaction among our Icelandic Friends regarding the Doukhobors coming and remaining here doing work much cheaper.[19]

The fear that the entire character of Manitoba would be altered by the wave of "foreigners" was of even greater political significance, especially in Brandon itself where these concerns were fostered by

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[18] Ibid., 381, Sifton to Hon. Sydney Fisher, May 9, 1899

[19] Ibid., vol. 55, 38397, Chas. Adams to Sifton, May 4, 1899. The Independence later reported that "Doukobohors and Galicians hire readily for $30" as farm labourers, a wage that was approximately five dollars below the average. Independence, July 25, 1901

W.G. King and his newspaper, The Independent.[20] King, a Sifton supporter in the 1896 campaign, had subsequently been employed in the Immigration Department. Upon leaving this employment for reasons which are not clear,[21] King established The Independent, a violently "racist" daily newspaper[22] which would exploit local fears in order to discredit Sifton particularly, and the Liberals in general.[23] Thus, the Liberals, both provincially and federally, were regularly accused of showing favoritism towards those whom King variously described as "pampered paupers," "foreign scum" and "barbarians":

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[20] The Independent was also entitled, on occasions, the Independence.

[21] Sifton supporters explained that King had been "fired" by Sifton and, hence, his bitter opposition was to be explained in those terms. King, for his part, explained that he had been dismissed due to his opposition to the "Galician invasion" and to the fact he had proven, with supporting statistics, "the danger of admitting such people in masses." Independence, September 13, 1900

[22] The most reprehensible example of King's racist journalism was a "news story" on "The Doukhoborski."

> "They resemble the Galacians in their appearance but are cleaner, being evidently a picked sample selected for the Hon. Mr. Sifton's own constituency; doubtful to anyone who knows the habits of the Russian peasantry. They are without a trace of animation and their ponderous flabbiness gives little promise of later activity when spring opens.
>
> The absence of babies is apparent...but it may be that like other Russian sects they limit their progeny by killing off the superfluous ones and weaklings."

The Independent, February 2, 1899

[23] Sifton contended that King had returned "...to Brandon for the purpose of blackmailing our party into buying him off, but he will be a much older man that [sic] he is now before I get round to his views." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 231, 512, Sifton to G.D. Wilson, March 21, 1899. King, subsequently, implied that the Liberals had initiated an attempt to purchase the newspaper or its editor by offering him $100 per month "provided that the paper in the future supported the Hon. Mr. Sifton." Independence, September 13, 1900. While both sides rather self-righteously asserted their innocence, one suspects that D.J. Hall's thesis--i.e., that Sifton considered King's asking price of $25,000 to be exorbitant--is well founded. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 531

> Manitobans well remember that their premier has publicly stated that the Galicians and the Doukhobors are the best of settlers, that he wished there were many more of them, and feel that if he considers this foreign scum of humanity superior to our own people that there must be a reason for it, and that reason probably is because they will be more docile voters and not trouble themselves about the government's administration so long as they get assistance and favours.[24]

Thus, Sifton's "success" in furthering the growth of Western Canada, Brandon included, was certainly a "two edged sword."

However, it was Sifton's administration of the Yukon "gold rush" that had proved to be the most controversial feature of his career to 1899. Without the assistance of an experienced, non-partisan civil service, the task of administering the Yukon gold rush was immense, if not insuperable. Certainly there were many charges of mismanagement and corruption, and the federal Conservatives who initiated those accusations believed that Sifton, as the Minister most directly responsible, should be held accountable. The nature and gravity of those charges varied considerably. For example, Sifton was accused of appointing an undue number of his Brandon friends to government positions in the Yukon, a charge that was probably justified. He was also accused of permitting

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24. Independence, November 20, 1899

25. It is interesting to note that one historian has implied that Sifton was unable to persuade the Yukon Council to appoint his friend, J.D. McGregor (a Brandonite who had been previously appointed as Inspector of Mines), as "issuer of liquor licenses"--due to the fact that he had been charged with certain illegal activities in the past. David R. Morrison, The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909 (Toronto 1968), 34. However, J.D. McGregor (Manitoba's future Lieutenant-Governor) was clearly in charge of the issuance of liquor importation permits in early 1900. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 78, 59225-26, W.W. Cory to A.P. Collier, April 23, 1900

A.E. Philp, his former law partner in Brandon, to import liquor into the Yukon at a time when it was illegal to do so. In addition, there were veiled insinuations about the Minister's new found wealth, charges that did not need to be proven to be politically effective.

While Sifton, by 1899, was surely identified as a federal politician, there was a sufficiently strong connection between federal and provincial politics--both in reality and in the public mind--that public dissatisfaction with the federal government and/or Sifton could be politically disadvantageous for the provincial Liberals. It was, therefore, not necessarily an advantage for the same party to be in office at both levels, and Liberal organizers were very cognizant of this fact. Thus, J. Obed Smith, provincial Liberal organizer, wrote to Sifton prior to the 1899 provincial election requesting that the Minister come west and hold public meetings in order to deal with pressing federal issues.

> There is much more discontent with Federal Policy' than I expected.... Am afraid tho' that a Federal election before our own, would prejudice our chances. People criticise Federal more than local, and will not dissassociate [sic] them.[26]

However, the provincial Liberals in 1899 appeared to be on politically secure ground. The forty-two year old incumbent, Chas. Adams, had been an active businessman[27] and municipal leader before his election to the provincial legislature in 1894.[28] The voters list had been prepared under the auspices of the Greenway government and Liberal organizer, C.A. Young, was satisfied that the work had been done thoroughly (and fairly).[29] In addition, the local Conservatives were reportedly divided:[30] ex-Mayor E. Evans, who had been nominated in July 1899, did withdraw on the eve of the contest. Dr. S.W. McInnis, a local dentist, became the new Conservative candidate only two weeks before the polling date. As a result, the Liberal organizer was understandably confident on the eve of the election: "We consider the three Brandons safe...."[31]

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[26] Ibid., vol. 72, 53599, J.O. Smith to Sifton, July 21, 1899

[27] According to an anti-Sifton newspaper, Chas. Adams' saddlery and harness shop received $29,643.50 worth of government orders in 1898 and $19,622.40 worth in 1899. Independence, October 4, 1900

[28] However, his eligibility in 1899 was challenged on the grounds that he no longer resided in Manitoba. Adams refuted that charge by explaining that only his family had moved to Toronto. Nevertheless, after his defeat in that 1899 provincial election, he did follow them to Ontario! Winnipeg Daily Tribune, December 16, 1899

Both political parties conducted their 1899 election campaign in the traditional manner of that era. For instance, the Manitoba Free Press was mailed free of charge for several weeks to the "doubtfuls" as identified by Liberal organizers. However, the Free Press had just recently raised its subscription rates to twenty cents per week (despite the protests of Liberal organizers) and the pro-Conservative Tribune (which still sold for ten cents per week) continued to "flood the country," or so Liberal workers complained.[32] At the local level, the Liberals were enthusiastically supported by the Brandon Daily Sun while the Conservative cause was promoted both by the Independence and the Times. According to the Liberal daily, a special "political editor" had been sent to Brandon solely for the purpose of directing the Times during the course of the election campaign. This man, it was alleged, would be sent to Ontario to perform a similar role once the Manitoba election was completed.[33]

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[29] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 74, 55976, C.A. Young to Sifton, May 16, 1899

[30] Brandon Daily Sun, November 27, 1899

[31] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 72, 53703, J.O. Smith to Sifton, November 21, 1899

[32] Ibid., 53675, J.O. Smith to Sifton, October 14, 1899

[33] Brandon Daily Sun, November 30, 1899

One of the unusual features of this election, both locally and throughout the province, was the number of "issues" which predominated. Within Brandon itself, local Liberals, including Chas. Adams the candidate, attempted to revive the Schools Question in the hope that the Liberal party could hold the Orange vote which they had won in 1890.[34] The Conservatives, for their part, advocated prohibition,[35] more railways (government owned), more immigrants from Ontario, and the disfranchisement of some foreign immigrants who could not read and write English.[36] They also attempted to capitalize upon the controversy surrounding Sifton's administration of the Yukon. Thus, Sir Charles Tupper, the national Conservative leader, who spoke in Brandon during the height of the 1899 provincial campaign, raised the question of A.E. Philp's alleged contravention of the law regarding the importation of liquor into the Yukon.[37] Neither the charges nor the resultant counter-charges[38] appear to have been particularly convincing but the controversial issue had to be of some political significance even though the contest of the moment was provincial and not federal.

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[34] Adams attempted to capitalize on the fact that Sir Charles Tupper had allegedly stated in Winnipeg that the Schools Question was not yet settled. Ibid., December 6, 1899. The Sun had earlier stated flatly that Hugh John Macdonald would restore separate schools in Manitoba. Ibid., November 22, 1899

[35] There is no evidence to indicate that prohibition was a major issue in Brandon.

[36] Brandon Daily Sun, December 8, 1899

[37] Exactly what transpired at that particular Tupper meeting is not clear. A.E. Philp subsequently initiated a slander suit against Tupper for statements alledgedly made by the federal Conservative leader. On the other hand, Tupper denied making such charges and the Brandon Times, a pro-Conservative newspaper, made no mention of such comments. The pro-Liberal Sun editorialized, however, that this was evidence only of the fact that the Times was seeking to protect the Conservative leader. Brandon Daily Sun, December 12, 1899

[38] Sifton, for his part, accused Sir Charles Tupper of lying. Ibid., December 6, 1899

The results of that December 1899 election were a surprise to many. Hugh John Macdonald's Conservatives, with twenty-three seats, had defeated Premier Greenway, who now found his party reduced to fifteen members. Brandon electors, by the very narrow margin of 569 to 561,[39] had voted "in step" with the province as Dr. S.W. McInnis, the candidate of just two weeks standing, defeated the incumbent Liberal M.P.P., Chas. Adams. As elections are rarely, if ever, won or lost on a single issue, it is not surprising to note that W.L. Morton has suggested that several factors contributed to this defeat of a government in 1899. Thus, Greenway's allegedly extravagant financial policies; a disappointing railway policy; the dissatisfaction of the Orange Lodge with the 1897 Laurier-Greenway compromise; a "Canada first" reaction to the Laurier government's immigration policy; and the "loss" of both Clifford Sifton and Joseph Martin to federal politics combined with a revitalized Conservative party under the more publicly attractive leadership of Hugh John Macdonald had caused the change.[40] While the critical Winnipeg Daily Tribune maintained that Greenway's railway policies had caused the defeat,[41] Sifton--whose provincial role was of necessity somewhat more restricted--had complained, prior to the election, of the Greenway government's inactivity:

> ...busy as I have been, I venture to say that I have
> spoken at more meetings in the last two years than

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[39] Ibid., December 8, 1899

[40] W.L. Morton, Manitoba; a History (Toronto 1957), 278-81

[41] Winnipeg Daily Tribune, December 8, 1899. It must be noted, however, that the newspaper was conducting a strenuous campaign in favour of a government-owned railway system, a policy which Greenway had opposed.

> all of your ministers put together.... When your campaign comes on I will get up and help all I can, but my assistance will be of very little use if you let the other people have it all their own way until that time.[42]

The Greenway government, by 1899, had been in office for eleven years--which may well have been "too long." At least, A.C. Fraser, Brandon's ex-mayor who had succeeded Sifton as M.P.P. for North Brandon, already had lost some of the necessary "will to fight":

> Defeat has no terror for me personally, with my business nearly gone from me and the prospect of being on the street unless a change is made. You will not wonder if I gladly hope I may be defeated.... However, I am loyal to my party and will do all the fighting I can until the end of this campaign.[43]

Longevity in office could be both a political asset and a liability!

The Conservative victory in the constituency of Brandon City itself may have been secured for slightly different reasons. Brandon Liberals, Sifton concluded, had been caught "off guard."

> Adams' defeat in Brandon was a complete surprise to everyone, myself included. I think the other people succeeded in lulling our friends into a state of fancied security so that they thought they were having a walk-over. A lot of outside voters were not brought in, being deliberately left away to work for other

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[42] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 233, 703, Sifton to J.O. Smith, August 1, 1899. J.W. Dafoe contended that western dissatisfaction over the Laurier government's failure to reduce tariffs and the anti-Sifton "cabal" of Martin, Richardson and Cameron contributed to Greenway's defeat in 1899. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times, 127

[43] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 61, 43976, A.C. Fraser to Sifton, June 24, 1899

> candidates who were supposed to need them most.[44] Then some other Liberals who are jealous of Adams were willing to knife him out of the way. We are protesting the election[45] and expect to unseat McGinnis [sic], and we have a majority there if it is properly looked after.[46]

A.E. Philp, Sifton's former partner, blamed Adams himself for his defeat:

> He [Adams] knew of many things here which deprived him of enough Liberal support did not let us know of it.... There seems to be plenty of grounds here for a protest and we could doubtless easily win with a new man and I think Dr. McDiarmid is the one.[47]

The pro-Liberal Brandon Daily Sun also stated emphatically that "the real cause of defeat was the over-confidence of the Liberals."[48]

Several pro-Conservative newspapers, including the Brandon Times, gleefully concluded in their election reports that the Liberal defeats

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44. The identification, location and polling of the absentee vote was, in Sifton's opinion, one of the local organization's most important tasks:

> "Enclosed is a list of non-resident voters. Transportation arrangements are now complete. You will be able to get anything you want including special trains. Voters can be brought from any point of Canada. Get to Work."

Ibid., vol. 235, letterbook (l.b.) 20, 249, Sifton to J.O. Smith, November 30, 1899

45. Election protests were a common part of the electoral process during the Sifton era. Each side tended to initiate some protests, if only to be used as a negotiating point with the other side. The work of collecting evidence and handling the protest was the responsibility of local lawyers who were acting in a professional (i.e., paid) capacity. Sifton's evidence in 1899 was primarily that "there was whiskey and beer on tap in the Committee rooms, and I also understand that McInnis had treated publicly and otherwise rendered himself liable to disqualification."

Ibid., 286, Sifton to A.D. Cameron, December 14, 1899

46. Ibid., 376, Sifton to D.C. Fraser, December 22, 1899

47. Ibid., vol. 69, 51348, A.E. Philp to Sifton, December 13, 1899. Dr. McDiarmid was the current mayor of Brandon.

48. Brandon Daily Sun, December 8, 1899

in both Brandon City and North Brandon were evidence of Sifton's own political weakness. Thus, the Times asserted in a statement that was undoubtedly more wishful than factual: "Clifford Sifton as a political influence in or around Brandon is like the woman who fell out of the balloon--no longer in it."[49] Whether Sifton's political influence had, in fact, declined was difficult to determine but the next federal election, whenever it should occur, would be a concrete test of that hypothesis.

In the meantime, the more immediate political question in Brandon was the rapidly approaching municipal elections. The predominant issue in 1899 was the city's continuing financial crisis although all of the municipal candidates were seemingly of the same mind on this issue.[50] However, the fact that the eight man council was primarily Conservative--even though Mayor McDiarmid was a Liberal--was a matter of concern to some Liberals. Consequently, Adams, the defeated candidate of a few days before, wired to Sifton for advice:

> McGregor went today boys want me to stay here to help in municipal elections important for you that we elect council favourable. However, if you say go to Winnipeg, I will go down.[51]

The provincial Liberals, however, were still heavily engaged in two "deferred elections" and protests were pending even within Brandon. As a result, those Liberal political activists who saw a direct correlation between partisan (i.e., provincial and/or federal) and municipal politics in 1899 presumably decided to wait for another day. In any event, the mayoralty and aldermanic candidates were elected by acclamation in 1899.

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[49] Reprinted in the Winnipeg Daily Tribune, December 13, 1899

[50] All the municipal candidates in 1899 were agreed that it would not be possible to pay the full indebtedness of both principal and interest.

[51] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 55, 38430, Chas. Adams to Sifton, December 10, 1899

A federal election was "due" in 1900 and Brandon Liberals began that year in anything but an optimistic mood. They had just been defeated both locally and provincially and they feared that even Sifton's political future was rather dim. The undoubtedly unpleasant task of communicating these extensive concerns and complaints to the Minister was relegated to his ex-law partner, A.E. Philp:

> ...I believe it is thought by many of our own people that you could not be re-elected tomorrow....
>
> That you consult none but Adams and Fraser principally the former.
>
> That Adams through over-confidence and running his election as a one-man election caused us to lose Brandon.
>
> That Adams had antagonized too many of the party to be chosen as a representative of the party.
>
> That Adams was your nominee and the convention at which he was nominated had not been advertised....
>
> That Fraser was your nominee in N.B. [North Brandon] and lost the election through lack of sand [?] and work and through the men you sent into the constituency....
>
> That since you became Minister of the Interior, you have gradually withdrawn from that close intimacy and association which formerly made you so popular.
>
> That in your visits to this country since 1896 you have not been seen in your old office or met the members of the party generally save at some formal social functions.
>
> That your visits are made in your private car and none are aware of comings and goings save Adams or Fraser and none meet you save through some special invitation from Adams....
>
> That you should agitate the putting on the free list some imported agricultural implement preferably binders or coal oil.
>
> That an effort should be made to get a good Liberal paper into the houses of the people the principal literature

> at present being the Telegram Tribune and Montreal Star and locally the Brandon Times.
>
> That we should have a local paper which at least we need not be ashamed of.
>
> That you should counteract the effect of Dukobour [sic] immigration by strongly advocating English immigrants.
>
> That the patronage should not be dispensed without consultation with the members of the party.
>
> That it should not be given to those who have openly knifed us when the opportunity came.[52]

Whether Sifton changed his political habits as a result of this rather remarkable list of complaints is not known. He did, however, take immediate steps to prepare for what would be his first contested federal election campaign.[53] W.W. Cory was hired as constituency organizer at a salary of $100 per month plus expenses,[54] two young ladies were employed to prepare the canvasser's books,[55] and R.E.A. Leech, an ex-organizer, was engaged to do "special work" in the constituency.

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52. Ibid., vol. 87, 66937-39, A.E. Philp to Sifton, January 7, 1900

53. The Independence, in mid 1900, reported a rumour to the effect that Sifton was to become the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba. Independence, August 23, 1900. There is no evidence whatsoever to substantiate this suggestion although Sifton, in 1899, did write"...I have a very strong disposition to get out of the Government after the next election, but I think we are responsible for piloting the ship that far." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 231, 796, Sifton to I. Campbell, April 7, 1899

54. Ibid., microfilm (mf.) C-418, l.b.21, 812, Sifton to E.H. Maklin [sic], March 7, 1900

55. Cory was to prepare, on an average, five canvasser books for each poll. There were 119 polls in the federal riding of Brandon.

Although the local association was reluctant to become openly involved prior to Sifton's nominating convention,[56] Sifton's own staff commenced "canvassing" in early spring and by July 1900 2,500 "doubtfuls" were receiving (free of charge) the Free Press Weekly as part of his preparatory campaign.[57] Meanwhile, every voter (in Western Canada) received copies of several speeches made by such Liberal notables as W.S. Fielding, Richard Cartwright and Prime Minister Laurier.[58] Finally, the inevitable political posters were prepared to be "put up at all the stopping places."[59]

Philp, in his letter of January 7, 1900, had complained that Brandon Liberals suffered from lack of newspaper support. Although both the Manitoba Free Press and the Brandon Daily Sun were generally regarded as pro-Liberal newspapers, local Liberals were quite dissatisfied with their "performance." Sifton, himself, frequently urged A.J. Magurn, the editor of the Sifton-owned Manitoba Free Press, to campaign more strenuously on the Liberal party's behalf. After noting that R.L.

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[56] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 78, 59326, W.W. Cory to Sifton, August 18, 1900. His supporters rather appropriately suggested that they would be ill-advised to campaign openly for Sifton until the local association had officially chosen him as the candidate. Sifton, meanwhile, gave careful attention to all the details of that nominating convention as it drew nearer. As Sifton was closely identified with Brandon, it was decided to have his nomination proposed and seconded by a "couple of good farmers as far removed from Brandon City as possible." Ibid., vol. 78, 59329, W.W. Cory to Sifton, August 20, 1900

[57] It was decided not to distribute the Toronto Globe as well, owing to the fact that that newspaper was considered to be closely associated with the C.P.R. No political party, in 1900, wanted to be closely associated with the still unpopular C.P.R.

[58] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-419, 1.b.22,589, A.P. Collier to W.W. Cory, June 16, 1900

[59] Ibid., 582, A.P. Collier to W.W. Cory, May 25, 1900

Richardson's Tribune was constantly attacking the Liberal tariff policy, the Minister of the Interior stated flatly:

> You have to get down into the same place where the other people are and fight or they will cut your ground away from under your feet.[60]

W.W. Cory, in early 1900, also suggested:

> The Brandon Sun should also be taken in hand as everyone is disgusted with it under its present management.... It would pay our people to place two of the best men they can get in charge of the editorial dept. [sic] of both the F.P. [sic] and Sun as now is the time the best work can be done, before the campaign begins.[61]

While John W. Dafoe would later be appointed editor of the Manitoba Free Press in mid 1901, in place of the unsatisfactory A.J. Magurn, the Liberals seemingly lacked satisfactory newspaper support in 1900 even though the Free Press was actually owned by Sifton himself.[62]

The fact that Sifton was held accountable for the distribution of patronage in Western Canada was especially significant at election times. For example, the fact that several Tories were still employed at the Experimental Farm could, Sifton was warned, "cost you quite a few votes here in the city."[63] However, Sifton could do little to regulate the decisions of Bedford, the superintendent:

> ...he [Bedford] is altogether too slick for anyone who attempts to watch him. He will say that he is

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[60] Ibid., vol. 231, 354-55, Sifton to A.J. Maguire, March 14, 1899

[61] Ibid., vol. 78, 59197, W.W. Cory to A.P. Collier, March 30, 1900

[62] On the other hand, Sifton could perhaps "use" the Free Press to cover partisan political activity. For example, it was proposed, in 1901, that F.C. Potts--one of Sifton's organizers--might "go out ostensably [sic] as agent for the Free Press but to spend his time among Orangemen visiting lodges, etc." Ibid., vol. 126, 100433, R.E.A. Leech to A.P. Collier, March 3, 1902

[63] Ibid., vol. 55, 38397, Chas. Adams to Sifton, March 4, 1899

> going to do the right thing but when the time comes, he will have twelve or fifteen Conservative voters on the farm just as he had the last time....[64]

Sifton also failed to secure a desired (for political reasons) salary increase for one Thomas Robertson, an employee of the Brandon Industrial Farm, who apparently received the same salary as the other labourers.[65] Sifton's ability, therefore, to manipulate the civil service to his own political advantage was much less than either his supporters or his enemies believed.

One of the interesting rumours, in 1900, was that an Independent or an Independent Liberal candidate (supported allegedly by R.L. Richardson of the Tribune)[66] would enter the contest in order to split the Liberal vote. While a rumoured Independent nominating convention for Souris on March 29, 1900, never materialized, the Sifton forces were fully alert. Thus R.E.A. Leech, a Sifton organizer, was to be in Souris the day before the nomination and to remain throughout the event, securing whatever information might be available.[67] When it was rumoured a few months later that one Josh Calloway might run either in Brandon or Winnipeg, J. Obed Smith, who received his instructions directly from the Minister, reported:

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[64] Ibid., mf. C-418, l.b.24,825, Sifton to Hon. Sydney Fisher, December 29, 1900. Bedford "survived" until 1906.

[65] Ibid., mf. C-418, l.b. 21,825, A.P. Collier to T.K. Doherty, March 3, 1900

[66] Ibid., vol. 89, 69420, J.O. Smith to Sifton, August 3, 1900. R.L. Richardson would, himself, run in Lisgar; a Dr. Montgomery was to be nominated in Selkirk; and one Josh Callaway, it was rumoured, would stand in Brandon.

[67] Ibid., vol. 78,59189, W.W. Cory to A.P. Collier, March 23, 1900

> Have seen Magurn, and posted him, and he is sending a man after Josh; and so as soon as he shows his colours will do as your cipher desires.[68]

Regretfully, this all too cryptic cipher message failed to indicate what plan Sifton had devised for Josh Calloway. However, Calloway never emerged as a candidate in Brandon in 1900!

The Conservative strategy, meanwhile, was to secure a "name" candidate to oppose Sifton. Although the rumour that the rather vitriolic Sir Hibbert Tupper would stand in Brandon[69] proved to be false, Hugh John Macdonald was probably a better choice for several reasons. The new Premier's political stature would surely make him a creditable opponent for a Minister of the Interior. Macdonald was also less of a "parachute" candidate than Tupper would have been. Finally, the family name would presumably be a political asset in this predominantly Anglo-Saxon riding, especially for the 42% who were Ontario born.[70] While many Liberal observers had anticipated Macdonald's re-entry into federal politics, the Conservatives' rather dramatic decision to gamble politically by placing one of their most attractive candidates[71] into the most difficult riding in Manitoba was, in the words of one seasoned observer, the "political sensation of the times."[72] However, even a hard fought contest which kept Sifton occupied "at home" in the

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[68] Ibid., vol. 89,69424, J.O. Smith to Sifton, August 6, 1900

[69] Brandon Daily Sun, July 23, 1900

[70] Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1

[71] Any "Macdonald" was probably regarded to be a candidate of unusual promise and there were occasional rumours to the effect that Hugh John Macdonald would, if successful, succeed to the leadership of the federal Conservative party. Brandon Daily Sun, November 19, 1900

[72] PAC, J.S. Willison Papers, folder 48, 3938, J.D. Cameron to J.S. Willison, September 11, 1900

Brandon riding would help Conservative candidates elsewhere while the defeat of Sifton would be extremely politically significant. Therefore, the risk was probably worth taking.

One of the several facets of campaigning in 1900 was the special attention which was paid to the ethnic voter. French-speaking voters received free copies of La Patrie, a French language Manitoba newspaper. Although there were only approximately forty Icelandic voters[73] in the riding, pro-Sifton speakers of Icelandic descent were brought from Winnipeg[74] and an Icelandic youth was added to the post office staff as the Conservatives, who were capitalizing upon the fact that the local postal clerk was unable to distinguish between Icelandic names, had collected "all the Literature and letters intended for our friends."[75] Both parties also accused each other of attempting "to buy" the ethnic vote. The Tories allegedly were promising free groceries at an Icelandic meeting[76] while the Liberals were reportedly giving free beer to the residents of "the flats" (the area north of the railway tracks where many of the ethnic voters resided).[77] One campaigner was even accused of attempting to buy votes in the rather imaginative fashion of paying the exorbitant sum of five dollars for an "old lame mongrel fowl that wouldn't bring ten cents in a famine district."[78]

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[73] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 99, 77709, J.W. Fleming to Sifton, September 24, 1901

[74] Brandon Daily Sun, October 23, 1900

[75] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 89, 69480, J. Obed Smith to [Sifton?], October 2, 1900

The detailed attention which was paid to the ethnic vote was also evident in the concern expressed by Liberal organizers as to the future of a $125 loan which a prominent Brandon Liberal (who was now leaving the city) had made to the Icelandic community to assist with the construction of their hall. Thus, Sifton was warned that any attempt to "re-call" that sum might "seriously affect the votes of some sixteen of these people" (ibid., vol. 99, 77709, J.W. Fleming to Sifton, September 24, 1901) and that the Tories "will jump at the chance of taking up the loan, as it will affect fully half of the Icelandic voters here...." Ibid. As a result, Sifton took up the loan himself through the agency of his Brandon business agent, H.L. Adolph.

[76] Brandon Daily Sun, October 23, 1900

One of Sifton's assets as a campaigner was his ability to "call home" a number of friends and associates with whom he had been associated in the past.[79] For example, James A. Smart, ex-Liberal M.P.P. and currently Deputy Minister of Interior; J.D. McGregor, License Commissioner in the Yukon; J.B. Whitehead, "the successful contractor of the marsh drainage";[80] and a "Mr. Edgar from California" were some of "Sifton's men," as the Independence labelled them, who returned for the local campaign. Although T. Mayne Daly, Brandon's first mayor and the former Minister of the Interior, and T. Kelly also returned to assist Hugh John Macdonadd, it would appear that Sifton had more "I.O.U.'s" to "call in" than his Conservative opponent!

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77. Independence, November 1, 1900

78. The "vendor" denied, however, that the "sale" constituted a promise to vote for Macdonald and the unhappy Tory canvasser departed--without a promise of support, without his five dollars and even without the rooster! Brandon Daily Sun, October 29, 1900

79. However, politicians, on occasions, could hope to gain politically also by sending people away! For instance, J. Obed Smith reported on the problems being presented by one J.A. Wilson, a teacher at Fort Alexandria Indian School. Could Sifton not do something?

> "We have a man to send there the first week of the campaign, but it is quite useless sending anyone there as long as Wilson is on the spot."

PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 89, 69492, J.O. Smith to Sifton, October 18, 1900

80. Independence, September 27, 1900

As in most election campaigns, "issues"--as well as organization--were an integral part of this contest in Brandon. The major "debate" occurred when Sir (Charles) Hibbert Tupper spoke at a joint meeting with Sifton before some 3,000 people in the arena in perhaps the most dramatic political encounter in Brandon's history.[81] Tupper renewed his earlier accusations against Sifton's administration of the Yukon: that Sifton had used his political influence to secure employment for his relatives;[82] and that he had unjustly provided favours to A.E. Philp, his former law partner. Sifton, in some detail, denied the several charges and, by way of counterattack, accused Sir Hibbert Tupper of having been drunk while in the House of Commons. Whether this confrontation did more than keep the "Yukon issue" alive cannot be determined.

Railways were also a significant issue in the 1900 election.[83] The C.P.R., or rather the near monopoly of the C.P.R., was still extremely unpopular with Manitobans and any political party that was closely associated with the C.P.R. could suffer politically. Although the fact that Macdonald had served the C.P.R. as its solicitor had been used by the Liberals in the 1899 provincial election, it was Sifton who was most closely associated with the unpopular railway company in 1900. Thus, when ex-Premier Greenway admitted in early 1900 that his Liberal government had subsidized certain C.P.R. branch lines (such as that from Brandon to Waskada) to the extent of $1,750 per mile,[84] the federal Liberals were well aware of the consequences.

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[81] The fact that Hugh John Macdonald, the local candidate, was not even present during this classic, but bitter, encounter suggests that he did not want to be associated with that type of campaign, either for personal or political reasons.

[82] The accusation, specifically, was that Wm. Ogilvie, who was a relative of Mrs. Sifton's, held several important positions including that of Gold Commissioner. Sifton denied that Ogilvie, who had been a Department of Interior employee for some twenty years before Sifton became the Minister, had received any special consideration. Brandon Daily Sun, October 15, 1900. It should also be noted in passing that Sifton, on several recorded occasions, refused to assist someone who was a relative. For example, several wrote Sifton on T.H. Burrows's behalf, but Sifton was adamant in denying these claims for the specific reason that Burrows was his father-in-law.

[83] As measured by the amount of attention devoted to it both by the candidates and the press.

> Owing to the late Ry [sic] deals of Mr. Greenway, the fight has been completely knocked out of our friends.... The popular policy in this country is to have nothing whatever to do with the C.P.R. in the way of aiding it to extend its lines....[85]

When the Northern Pacific cancelled their tentative plans for expansion into northwestern Manitoba, ostensibly due to the fact that the federal government was permitting the C.P.R. to build competitive lines alongside Northern Pacific lines,[86] the Laurier government was again held to account. W.W. Cory, Sifton's local organizer, was discouraged by this turn of events:

> Up to a week or so ago, I think we were gaining ground in the constituency among the independents and disaffected Liberals, but since the passing of that C.P.R. charter I am afraid we have lost any ground gained and perhaps went behind a little.[87]

Fortunately for the Liberals, the Conservatives were also having difficulty in establishing a consistent and satisfactory railway policy. The Conservatives in the 1899 Manitoba election had advocated the public

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84. Greenway had previously denied that such subsidization had been paid. Independence, March 8, 1900

85. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 78, 59143, W.W. Cory to Sifton, January 28, 1900

86. Brandon Daily Sun, April 7, 1900

87. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 78, 59214-15, W.W. Cory to Sifton, April 10, 1900

ownership of railways: however, a few months later, government officials were suggesting that a proposed Brandon to Birtle extension would require subsidization. As Cory reported to his Minister, "the actions of the Macdonald govt. [sic] have improved our prospects very materially...."[88] Neither party, therefore, had a particularly appealing "record" on this important issue.

Brandon Conservatives were very hopeful that the Macdonald government's recent legislation prohibiting the sale of liquor by hotels or merchants would be politically beneficial. The Liberals, who feared that the sizable Methodist vote[89] might swing to the Conservatives as a result, stressed the fact that the Act had not yet been implemented:[90] "...show them [the temperance supporters] how Hugh John got frightened and left the field when prohibition wanted enforcing."[91] Meanwhile, the Conservatives undoubtedly lost some support as the advocacy of prohibition automatically meant that the hotel men, and most others in the liquor trade, would be in open opposition.[92]

Tariffs also became an issue in 1900 when Macdonald, who hoped to capitalize upon the Laurier government's failure to introduce extensive tariff reductions, personally advocated the free entry of agricultural implements. While the Liberals could not equal (let alone surpass) this proposal, the Brandon Daily Sun extensively publicized the statement of an Ontario Conservative M.P. who had declared that Hugh John Macdonald--on tariffs--"does not speak for the Conservative party."[93]

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[88] Ibid., 59282, W.W. Cory to Sifton, July 2, 1900

[89] Within Brandon itself, the Methodists constituted 22.62% of the population. Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1

[90] Doubts regarding the constitutionality of the legislation had presumably led to the delay in implementation. Morton, Manitoba A History, 282

[91] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 89, 69470, Ira Stratton to J.O. Smith, September 8, 1900

[92] Chas. Adams, the ex-M.P.P. for Brandon, was well aware of the political advantage to be gained among the hotel men of Ontario if Macdonald's policy was well publicized. Ibid., vol. 75, 56243, Chas. Adams to Sifton, August 27, 1900

In the end, 1900 proved to be a good year both for the Liberals in general[94] and for Sifton in particular. Sifton, who won all eleven polls in Brandon (where the non-residency of Hugh John Macdonald might have been a factor)[95] as well as a sizable majority of the rural votes,[96] attributed much of his political success to his own aggressiveness:

> In a campaign the object of a party is to get the public mind saturated with its own views and ideas.... The theory that you want the elector to read both sides and trust to him to decide that you are right is not practical politics.... Any success that I had in the west was due to the fact that under all the attacks, I never apologized, fought everybody Tupper, Macdonald, Richardson, Tribune, and everyone else---fired a Tory whenever I wanted to and have never explained or apologized.... The policy of the Government has been bold and progressive and I kept right on hammering that in, while the fellows like Dr. Rutherford who spent their whole time defending, were whipped both in the West and in Ontario.[97]

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[93] Brandon Daily Sun, October 9, 1900

[94] The Liberals had won 3 Manitoba constituencies (including the Brandon by-election)and,thus, a total of 119 seats in 1896. They made slight gains in Manitoba (with 4 seats) and in the rest of Canada (with 133) in 1900. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 86,96

[95] Sifton's margin of victory varied from two to forty-one votes in those urban polls. Ibid., November 8, 1900

[96] Sifton had a majority of approximately 450 votes in the "rural" area while his margin in Brandon was 223 votes.

[97] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-421, 1.b.25,548-50, Sifton to J.S. Willison, February 7, 1901

Perhaps, as Sifton suggested, offense is, in politics, the best defense.[98]

When the provincial Liberals had gone down to defeat in Brandon City and North Brandon in December 1899, some observers had predicted the political demise of Clifford Sifton. Now, in 1900, Sifton had won quite decisively in that very same area. It would appear, therefore, that there was no correlation in this instance between voting patterns at the provincial and federal level. However, Brandon voters in both elections had elected a member who would sit on the government side of the house. Were the voters of Brandon simply in step with the rest of the body politic or were they consciously seeking to vote "ministerialist"--to be on the powerful, winning side?

While Sifton left to assist in a deferred election in British Columbia and Hugh John Macdonald deliberated on his own political future,[99] the people of Brandon found themselves in the midst of their annual municipal election--an event that must have seemed somewhat anti-climatic after that classic struggle between the Minister of Interior and the ex-Premier. Brandon, however, had encountered a severe problem in 1900 in the form of the city's continuing financial crisis.[100] The number of voters had declined from 1,996 in 1898 to 1,789 in 1900[101] and the total property assessment, the base upon which taxes were levied, had likewise declined by one million dollars from 1896 to 1900.[102] In fact, the council early that year had seriously considered the possibility of placing the city in receivership.[103] Ironically, the city's financial crisis was not, however, the distinguishing feature of the 1900 municipal election. Instead, the accusation that partisan politics was becoming an integral part of municipal politics and that municipal politicians were using "big league" campaign techniques became the predominant concern--at least in the eyes of "the press." Both of the mayoralty candidates were well known party men. John Hanbury, a lumberman and Brandon's largest employer (with the exception of the C.P.R.), was a prominent Conservative; while A.C. Fraser, a department store owner, was the ex-Liberal M.P.P. for North Brandon. Both mayoralty candidates (and several aldermanic hopefuls) solicited electoral support with paid advertisements in the daily newspapers--which was an innovative technique in 1900.[104] Fraser also used several canvassers "especially

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[98] The disappointed Independence, however, explained Macdonald's defeat in terms of the "fickleness" of temperance supporters; Sir Charles Tupper's error in attacking Sifton publicly on the strength of what proved to be a forged telegram; and the Liberals' corrupt campaign tactics. Independence, November 15, 1900. However, while charges of impersonation were laid against four Sifton supporters (ibid., March 14, 1901), there is nothing to indicate that there was more corruption in the 1900 federal election than in any other.

[99] Hugh John Macdonald was offered two Conservative seats in Ontario but he decided, instead, to retire from politics after this defeat in 1900.

[100] The fact that only 73 of 1232 city lots which were available in a tax-arrears sale had found buyers was an indication of the depressed atmosphere of 1900. Independence, May 31, 1900

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101. Ibid., August 23, 1900

102. Brandon Daily Sun, November 27, 1900

103. Ibid., March 10, 1900. However, council ultimately decided against the repudiation of any portion of its debt which caused Alderman J.W. Fleming, a prominent Liberal, to resign in protest with the warning that Brandon--unless council reversed this decision--would become a "second edition of Rapid City (which God forbid) for who will stay here that is in a position to move." Ibid., March 17, 1900

104. Two years later, one newspaper informed its readers that A.J. Carter, one of the aldermanic hopefuls in 1900, had advertised in this manner and that the bill was yet to be paid! Thus, the new electioneering technique was not without its disadvantages. Independence, November 27, 1902

among the foreigners"[105] and the ex-Liberal M.P.P. was significantly using the same committee rooms that Sifton had used a few weeks before.[106] As Hanbury had neither employed canvassers nor hired a committee room, the Independence attempted to label Fraser--who eventually triumphed with a mere seven vote majority[107]—as the only partisan. Whether or not this issue of "party politics" was politically significant cannot, however, be determined. That there was a connection between partisan politics (whether it be at the provincial or federal level) and municipal government does seem, nevertheless, to be self-evident.[108]

While there would be no provincial or federal elections for some time, politics in Brandon was a continuing process. Jobs had to be found for Sifton's now unemployed organizers. Thus, J. Obed Smith became the new Immigration Commissioner[109] while R.E.A. Leech, who in turn hired J.H. Ingram, was employed to direct the census enumeration

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105. Ibid., December 20, 1900. The issue of using "canvassers" was obviously of some political importance as the Brandon Daily Sun immediately denied that there had been an organized canvass on Fraser's behalf. Brandon Daily Sun, December 19, 1900

106. There is no evidence, however, to indicate that Sifton himself played any part in the mayoralty contest.

107. Fraser received 461 votes while Hanbury received 454. Brandon Daily Sun, December 19, 1900

108. One of the interesting sidelights to this 1900 municipal election in Brandon was the utilization of the "Macdonald voting machine," named in honor of its inventor, F.A. Macdonald, a Winnipeg lawyer. The principle of the machine was quite simple. The voter dropped a marble into the slot opposite the name of the candidate of his choice. The deputy returning officer turned a crank and the vote was recorded. While the machine performed satisfactorily in this experiment, there is no evidence of its employment in later elections. Ibid., December 4, 1900

109. Independence, January 24, 1901

in Sifton's own riding.[110] On the other hand, some government employees, such as Jos. Kavanagh--the postmaster of Brandon since 1881, were now dismissed for "offensive partisanship."[111] However, Brandon area Liberals were still frustrated by the actions of Bedford, the Superintendent of the Brandon Experimental Farm, who allegedly was dismissing "strong grits" for economy reasons while Tories were retained.[112] Although Sifton did secure the dismissal of one Thornton, the Minister's staff suspected that his successor at the Brandon Experimental Farm "is a worse Tory than Mr. Thornton...."[113] What seems to be evident is that dismissals of political opponents from the civil service were frequently secured only with surprising difficulty, especially when those individuals were not employed in Sifton's own department. Superintendent Bedford, therefore, may well have benefitted from certain, unknown inter-ministerial rivalries which helped lessen Sifton's political influence in this specific instance.[114]

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[110] However, one had to be careful about the placement of organizers, during election free periods, if those same organizers were to be employed again in the future. For example, one Perry--another Sifton worker--had been offered what was regarded as undesirable employment.

> "The Liquor organization want him to do work for them but if he is to work for us even later I don't think he should mix up with that company.
>
> I am asking him to wait until Monday before doing anything and will be glad if you wire me on receipt of this...."

PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 126, 100429, R.E.A. Leech to A.P. Collier, February 28, 1902

[111] Independence, February 21, 1901

[112] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 99, 77889, A.C. Fraser to Sifton, January 5, 1901

[113] Ibid., mf. C-422, 1.b.25,624, A.P. Collier to A.C. Fraser, February 8, 1901

Another (and very different) feature of politics in Brandon in 1901 was the manner in which both parties attempted to appeal to the youth. Well equipped club rooms, billiard tournaments, ball games,[115] a (Conservative) literary and debating society, and meetings which on one occasion featured a piano solo by Professor Plackett and a violin solo by Professor Plant were all part of that day's political process.

To a pioneer society in which transportation was one of the community's most urgent needs, railways and politics were almost interchangeable. Therefore, the Roblin government's acquisition of the Northern Pacific's Manitoba section for ninety-nine years[116] which it, in turn, leased to Mackenzie and Mann's Canadian Northern system--with the stipulation that rates were to be regulated--was of monumental political (and economic) significance. The popularity of that "deal" was such that even Sifton was reluctant to oppose it.

> I put up through any influence I had at my disposal as strong a fight as I could while the [Manitoba] legislature was dealing with the subject. I was simply appalled and amazed by the lack of popular support....
>
> Roblin's cry in an election would be Provincial Rights and that the Government here was standing

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[114] Bedford himself was able to survive in the face of such opposition until 1906 when it was finally reported that he had "resigned." Brandon Daily Sun, April 10, 1906

[115] Both the Liberals and the Conservatives had ball teams on several occasions. Thus, even the "sports page" was not free of politics as suggested by one headline which read "Liberals Look Like Champions." Ibid., August 2, 1904

[116] Ibid., February 15, 1901. W.L. Morton states that the contract was for 999 years. Morton, Manitoba A History, 284

> in with the C.P.R.. On the whole, I don't feel that I ought to come out against it....[117]

The Roblin Conservatives, for the moment, had scored a real political "coup."

Manitoba Liberals, meanwhile, seemed to be lacking a sense of direction. While there was considerable dissatisfaction with the aging Greenway who had lost in 1899, there were no likely successors. As Chas. Adams, the ex-M.P.P. for Brandon City, had reported to Sifton in 1901: "...if [Isaac] Campbell is not available old Tom Greenway will have to go at it once more if he can be induced."[118] Subsequently, Greenway--presumably by default--was re-elected leader late in 1901. However, when some Brandon Liberals, as early as 1901, began to debate the question of their next provincial candidate, Sifton seemingly regarded the act to be premature:[119]

> I doubt if any particular necessity arises for trying to pick out a candidate for the local Legislature in Brandon at the present time, but whoever the party may select will be agreeable to me.[120]

Despite that apparent disinterest, Sifton was receiving "intelligence" reports from Chas. Adams who reported favourably on one Captain Ramsay.[121]

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117. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-423, l.b.28,7-9, Sifton to Frank Fowler, April 8, 1901

118. Ibid., vol. 92, 11913-14, Chas. Adams to Sifton, October 29, 1901

119. There was, however, a rumour which suggested that Roblin might call the election in late 1901 if the crops proved to be good. Brandon Daily Sun, July 11, 1901

120. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-423, l.b.28,453, Sifton to A.E. Philp, July 15, 1901

121. Ramsay could "command the respectable portion of voters and he will cut into Dr. McInnes tough vote more than any other man." Ibid., vol. 93, 11913-14, Chas. Adams to Sifton, October 29, 1901. Ramsay was also "a new man and the different factions will unite on a new man quicker than an old one...." Ibid.

One suspects that the provincial Liberal party needed the constant guidance of a firm hand--such as that of Sifton's--by 1901. However, Sifton's own ministerial responsibilities prevented him from exerting the leadership that he could provide so effectively.[122]

Party politicians, even in "election free" years,[123] had to pay constant attention to the mechanics of politics--to patronage and organization matters. Sifton, for example, was constantly faced with patronage problems during his entire career as Minister. The patronage problem was complicated by the fact that Sifton had to ensure that the public's interests were, to some degree, protected while he, at the same time, satisfied his own supporters. For example, Sifton had been embarrassed by the fact that J.W. Fleming, a Liberal horse dealer, had supplied unsatisfactory stock to the Department of the Militia. As a result, Fleming's appeal for a renewal of the contract in 1902 fell on deaf ears![124] In another instance, Sifton refused to heed the pleas of R.E.A. Leech, one of his own ex-organizers:

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[122] Hall notes that Sifton's increased involvement in the Alaska boundary dispute in 1902-3 meant that there was considerably less time available to devote to party organization in Manitoba. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 760

[123] 1901 was also an "election free" year at the municipal level. The fact that local economic conditions were improving may have contributed to the spirit of equanimity that seemed to prevail. For example, Mayor Fraser, a Liberal, offered to step aside in favour of Alderman Nation, a Conservative, but the latter declined with the expressed hope that Mayor Fraser would seek re-election. S.C. Doran, an aldermanic hopeful and a rather Populist-like Conservative, tried in vain to arouse the public on the issues of tax concessions to expanding businesses and the "multi-millionaires" who controlled City Hall. Brandon Daily Sun, December 7, 1901. Frustrated by his failures, Doran subsequently withdrew: consequently, Mayor Fraser and the aldermanic candidates were re-elected by acclamation. As in 1899, electoral disinterest, rather than partisan politics, seemed to predominate at the municipal level.

[124] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 248, 102, Sifton to B. Trotter, May 29, 1902

> I am afraid Leech is a shyster. He has been paid well for his work on the census.... You can give him the smooth tongue but don't take his advice or consult him and don't ever let him know anything again. We are lucky that [he] has not broken on us before.[125]

However, Sifton would occasionally (but reluctantly) concur with a proposal so as to be "fair" to his supporters. When H.C. Graham, a customs official in Brandon and a Sifton supporter, applied to have a driving buggy imported duty free from the United States, the Minister rather unhappily agreed.

> I do not see any reason why the Collector of Customs should get his buggy in free any more than anyone else, but the Department has been doing it for other people, particularly for Scott of Winnipeg, who is the worst Tory this side of the Rocky Mountains, and if they can do it for Scott, they had better do it for Graham.[126]

Sifton, despite his expanding ministerial responsibilities, still had to assume the task of master-minding the operations of the Liberal party in Manitoba, even at the provincial level. For example, Sifton, in late 1902, issued some direct advice to the provincial Liberals who were on the eve of another election. Meetings should be held in every constituency; at least 75-100 meetings should be held before the end of January next. Leadership was urgently needed:

> There is no use in looking around and waiting for Greenway to move because he won't move a step--he will do absolutely nothing. I think myself that you [J.D. Cameron] ought to take the lead. There is no one else capable of doing it.[127]

Although Sifton, at that point, was still the principal strategist, he would not publicly launch the provincial campaign in early 1903: "My reason being that I think it very undesirable to mix-up issues at the present moment."[128] His open participation, Sifton suggested, would only "widen the issue and stiffen up the Conservatives who are weak on the Roblin Government."[129]

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[125] Ibid., vol. 126, 100457, Sifton to A.P. Collier, July 26, 1902

[126] Ibid., vol. 248, 185, Sifton to A.P. Collier, June 3, 1902

[127] Ibid., vol. 249, 512, Sifton to J.D. Cameron, December 4, 1902

While all M.P.'s undoubtedly received many appeals for financial aid from local clubs and charities, Sifton, due to his personal wealth, was probably expected to support the Liberal party to an extraordinary degree. For instance, Sifton financed the local club rooms in Brandon and contributed generously to the support of party facilities in Winnipeg. He also underwrote the party's organizational activities in Manitoba, whenever the need arose.[130] As a result, Brandon's M.P. advised at least one potential candidate not to enter politics: "I am bound to say that I do not think it would be wise for you to do so. I know better than most people what it means to be in politics, speaking financially...."[131] Politics, in the early 1900s, was seemingly a "rich man's game."

The politicians, in 1902, also concerned themselves with the public issues of the day and with those issues that might become of general concern. Prohibition was one such issue. When the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council found the Macdonald Act to be constitutionally

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128. Ibid., 549, Sifton to J.D. Cameron, December 4, 1902

129. Ibid., 606-7, Sifton to C.A. Young, December 8, 1902

130. Ibid., vol. 136, 108467, C.A. Young to Sifton, September 11, 1902. Young wrote to say that he was making a sight draft on Sifton for $800 to cover expenses until other promises of financial support had been fulfilled.

131. Ibid., vol. 248, 129, Sifton to George Walton, May 30, 1902. While Sifton made no reference to the Member of Parliament's stipend, it had been raised recently from $1,000 to $1,500 per session. Brandon Daily Sun, June 1, 1901

valid, the Conservatives decided to retest the will of the people in a referendum. Sifton had advice--but no instructions--for J.W. Dafoe, his newly appointed Free Press editor, on this matter.

> Remember two things, the great bulk of the rural population of Manitoba is absolutely solid on Prohibition and will vigorously resent any throwing water on it. Secondly, the towns, however loudly any paper within them may talk about Prohibition, are strongly against it, with the exception of Centre Winnipeg.[132]

Locally, the Liberals opposed the referendum as two plebiscites had been conducted and a provincial election had been fought primarily on that issue. The Roblin government--the Liberals claimed--had a responsibility to act.[133] On the other hand, G.R. Coldwell, a future Conservative M.P.P., argued that the government must be certain that the public supported prohibition or the legislation could never be effective.[134] Many religious leaders, who had been the key supporters of prohibition to this point, advocated that the voters boycott this referendum which was designed they feared to help Roblin "to get out of the hole" that he was in.[135] Whether many voters purposely boycotted the referendum is difficult to determine. What was evident, however, was that 613 voters opposed prohibition while only 321 approved[136]--as Sifton had predicted. That issue, for the moment, was resolved.

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132. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-425, 1.b.30, 429, Sifton to Dafoe, November 25, 1901

133. Brandon Daily Sun, January 15, 1902

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid., March 11, 1902

136. The total vote was comparable to that polled in the last mayoralty election. Independence, April 3, 1902. The vote was more or less uniform throughout the city although the negative votes won poll one (the east end) by less of a margin than in any other area.

Railways and politics remained closely interrelated as the 1901-2 fall grain blockades and a serious fuel shortage in Brandon in the late months of 1902 caused much public dissatisfaction with the C.N.R. As the pro-Liberal Sun eagerly reminded its readers, the Roblin government, despite the lavish government aid provided to the C.N.R., had failed to solve Brandon's transportation problems.[137] J.W. Dafoe, who would prove to be one of the most astute political observers ever to reside in Manitoba, believed, in late 1902, that the Roblin Government was vulnerable, especially as a result of their railway problems.

> The blockade along the C.N.R. is very bad at points and this is telling heavily against Roblin & Co. as in former years these points were well served by N.P.R. empties which are obtainable this year in only limited quantities.[138]

The economy of Manitoba--the "Wheat City" included--was dependent upon the ability of the transportation industry to move grain to market. Railways could easily become the key issue in the anticipated 1903 provincial election.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Brandon were engaged in a municipal election of extraordinary interest due to the determined appeal by some of the candidates for the working class vote. S.C. Doran had attempted to portray himself as a workingman's candidate in 1901 prior to his withdrawal from the contest. In 1902, an aldermanic candidate in the city's east end ward one campaigned on the platform that the millionaires had dominated city government for too long and that the time had come for a "people's candidate" or "the workingman's friend."[139]

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[137] Brandon Daily Sun, December 2, 1902

[138] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 120, 95836, Dafoe to Sifton, October 28, 1902

[139] Brandon Daily Sun, December 6, 1902

as R.D. Evans described himself. In addition, mayoralty candidate J.W. Fleming, the Liberal druggist-horse dealer, advertised himself as the workingman's candidate.[140] Fleming's advertisements--which stated that "he [Fleming] is not the nominee of any clique, but of the Masses"[141]--implied that his opponent, Alderman Nation (who was an active Conservative), was a candidate of the "establishment clique" that had allegedly governed Brandon throughout its past.[142]

Why did the new emphasis on the workingman appear in Brandon as suddenly as it did in 1902--a year of notable economic growth? A new flour mill and two new factories had opened while a new brewery was planned. These industrial developments presumably provided more employment for "workingmen" and probably their numbers increased significantly as a result.[143] Perhaps the increase in numbers *per se* of the working class and a new political awareness on the part of politicians who had witnessed the election of A.W. Puttee in Winnipeg as a Labour M.P. in 1900 led to this new (for Brandon) political emphasis on the "workingmen."

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[140] While the *Sun* attributed J.W. Fleming's mayoralty victory to his "particularly looking after" the workingmen's vote (*ibid.*, December 17, 1902), that same workingmen's vote, if *such* a collective vote actually existed, was insufficient to elect aldermanic candidate Evans--another "workingmen's friend"--in the east end ward one.

[141] *Ibid.*, December 15, 1902

[142] The *Sun* also stressed that Nation had the support of Senator Kirchoffer, a Conservative, and Dr. McInnis, Brandon's (Conservative) M.P.P. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1902. Fleming supporters also attempted to gain politically by stating that Nation had refused to agree not to canvass for support. Canvassing was still associated, in the public mind, with party politics. *Ibid.*, December 15, 1902

[143] At least, the *Sun* was stating editorially by early 1903 that "the workingmen of Brandon constitute the largest section of voters." *Ibid.*, February 3, 1903

As Fleming's mayoralty victory was immediately nullified due to the terms of a recent (and relatively unknown) amendment to the Municipal Act,[144] a mayoralty by-election was held in February 1903. Again both political parties were, in a sense, represented as Robert Hall, a prominent farmer and the president of the Brandon Liberal Association,[145] opposed Alderman Hanbury, one of Brandon's biggest businessmen and a prominent Conservative.[146] However, the Sun again attempted to portray Hall (the Liberal) as the "citizen's candidate" and Hanbury as a member of the "old regime" which had allegedly misgoverned Brandon in the past.[147] While this same biased source also contended that this by-election constituted "the setting of the workingmen against the businessmen,"[148] one cannot determine whether Hall's victory over Hanbury (by a vote of 476 to 392) was, in any way, the result of a new working class consciousness in Brandon.

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[144] Fleming had been listed on the assessment rolls as tenant rather than as a property owner.

[145] Hall was embarrassed by an election eve announcement in the Manitoba Free Press of the names of those farmers, his own included, who had been selected by the federal government to go to Great Britain on an expense paid recruiting trip for the Immigration Department. After Hanbury published an election eve circular which attempted to capitalize on his opponent's appointment, Hall was forced to deny the accuracy of the story and to forego the trip. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 142, 114148, Robert Hall to Sifton, February 5, 1903

[146] It is interesting to note, however, that Hanbury reportedly did not secure all of the Conservative vote--for a rather intriguing reason.

> "Mr. Hanbury was trying to get the support of the Conservatives solid and did get all but those who were very friendly with Dr. McInnis, and, afraid that Mr. Hanbury would be brought out as their next candidate, those of course voted for me."

PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 142, 114148, Robert Hall to Sifton, February 5, 1903. This appears to be an interesting example of the degree of interrelationship that existed between municipal and provincial politics.

[147] Brandon Daily Sun, February 3, 1903

While a Liberal and a Conservative had been busy contesting Brandon's mayoralty by-election, their respective political parties were preparing for the 1903 provincial contest. One of the most crucial of those preparatory steps was the compilation of the voters list. This was the provincial government's responsibility which gave the party in power an immense political advantage. The Manitoba Elections Act had been amended in 1901 to require personal registration, the production of a Certificate of Naturalization by all non-British subjects,[149] and an educational test for all naturalized "foreigners" who had been in Canada less than seven years.[150] The requirement for personal registration was particularly significant. Many voters would not register unless someone paid their travel expenses[151] and the Liberals, after 1901, believed that they had lost several hundred votes in Manitoba "due in part to the fact that in the making of the lists we had not the machinery nor the financial resources to secure a complete registration of all parties favourable to us."[152]

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[148] Ibid., February 5, 1903

[149] Sifton contended that the production of the Certificate of Naturalization was a virtually impossible requirement: "There is not one in ten who has not lost his certificate. The provision is aimed against the Liberal party because three quarters of the foreign voters are Liberals." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 251, 249, Sifton to Chas. Fitzpatrick, March 14, 1903

[150] Dafoe stated that the educational test "was leveled directly against the Galicians, although foreigners of other nationalities suffered to some extent, and the result is that from 1000 to 1500 Galician voters favourable to us are off the lists." PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 286, 77873-75, Dafoe to Laurier, October 16, 1903

One of the key factors in any election campaign was the attitude of the press. For that reason, political parties used whatever influence they had available to secure such support. The judicious distribution of government printing contracts and of government paid advertising was one means available but this alone might be insufficient to guarantee a newspaper's support. Certainly outright ownership, as in the case of the Manitoba Free Press, was more advantageous. Thus Dafoe could be instructed not to

> antagonize the P.R.U., the Independents or the Prohibitionists, but rather hold out the olive branch to them. I believe that a general coalition of the opponents of the Roblin Government must be formed in order to make success certain.[153]

However, the Liberal's principal concern, in 1903, was to secure the support of the "foreign" press. As a result, Sifton agreed to purchase Der Nordwestern, a German language newspaper, for some $15,000[154] and to consider the establishment of a "Galician" newspaper, both of which would be ostensibly owned by "dummy" organizations.[155]

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[151] What the parties could, and did do, was to offer to pay the one dollar fee required to secure the Certificate of Naturalization. Even this could prove to be a problem of some consequence as the (Liberal) legal firm of Clement and Clement paid $36 in this manner prior to the July 1903 provincial election. Brandon Liberals were so disenchanted, however, with the results of that provincial campaign that they refused to pay any further campaign costs and it later fell to Sifton, the federal M.P., to accept the bill! PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 258, 180, J.B. Harkin to Chas. Adams, May 2, 1904

[152] PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 286, 77873, Dafoe to Laurier, October 16, 1903

[153] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 250, 863, Sifton to Dafoe, February 24, 1903

[154] Ibid., vol. 251, 203, Sifton to J.W. Sifton, March 12, 1903

While the Sifton press might play a significant role in the 1903 provincial election, Sifton himself was still reluctant to become involved--and his editor, J.W. Dafoe, initially concurred in that decision. However, although Dafoe, as late as June 24, 1903, was advising the minister not to "show yourself openly,"[156] the Free Press editor did urge Sifton to "take some means to let it be known that you are desirous of seeing Roblin beaten."[157] In the end, the fact that the Laurier Government was in the midst of a serious cabinet crisis[158] forced Sifton to decline the last moment entreaties (Dafoe's included) for assistance. Whether Sifton was secretly relieved that this cabinet crisis kept him out of what would prove to be an unsuccessful campaign cannot be determined.

Brandon Liberals had chosen A.C. Fraser, a fifty-three year old ex-M.P.P.,[159] to challenge the incumbent Conservative, Dr. S.W. McInnis.

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[155] Thus, while a few shares were to be sold to two or three Galicians, the bulk of the shares would be registered in the name of some "friendly" person: he, in turn, was to sign "a transfer in blank and a declaration of trust in blank and give them to my Father so that they can be locked up and kept securely." Ibid., vol. 252, 684-85, Sifton to E.H. Macklin, August 20, 1903

[156] Ibid., vol. 140, 111898, Dafoe to Sifton, June 24, 1903

[157] Ibid.

[158] This particular crisis concerned the Minister of Railway's opposition to Laurier's Grand Trunk Pacific policy. Ibid., vol. 252, 109, Sifton to Dafoe, July 14, 1903

[159] A.C. Fraser had been born in Ontario in 1845; had moved to Brandon in 1881; and had opened his department store in 1884. He had been elected mayor in 1888-89 and M.P.P. for North Brandon after Sifton had entered federal politics in 1896. After Fraser had lost in 1899, he had successfully returned to municipal politics winning election as mayor in 1901 and 1902.

Conscious, perhaps, of the strength of the Roblin government throughout the province, Brandon Liberals attempted to focus on the local candidates and local issues. For example, they attempted to belittle McInnis on the grounds that he had not been invited into the cabinet[160] and that his only major contribution to the legislative debate was a proposal for a rain making machine![161] The Liberals also claimed that Brandon had been ignored by the Roblin government and that a promised Agricultural College would actually be located at Carman, once the election was safely past.[162] Finally, Fraser's supporters made a definite attempt to divide the local Conservatives by suggesting that the Roblin-Rogers Conservatives were not the equivalent of the "better class of Conservatives"[163] who had supported Hugh John Macdonald, and that Manitoba would have been better served had Macdonald remained as premier. In fact, the Sun claimed that nearly all of the "honest" electors who had voted Conservative in 1899 were swinging over to A.C. Fraser.[164] The Conservatives, for their part, did hold out the hope that the Agricultural College would be located in Brandon; the construction of a railway branch line between Brandon and Neepawa was announced; and, in addition, they attempted to claim credit for Brandon's continuing economic "boom."

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160. The Sun claimed that Brandon rightfully deserved representation in the cabinet and it assured its readers that Fraser would be a prominent part of a Greenway government. Brandon Daily Sun, May 6, 1903

161. Ibid., July 6, 1903

162. Ibid., July 11, 1903

163. Ibid., July 10, 1903

164. Ibid., July 9, 1903

Although McInnis defeated Fraser by a slightly increased margin of forty-two votes,[165] the local Conservative's performance did not seem to equal that of his party which won thirty-one seats to the Liberals' nine. The Roblin government's re-election, J.W. Dafoe contended, was due to the political debauchery, the like of which had never been exceeded before:

> ...we did not get ten percent of the floating and loose vote. The enemy bought up the "hired men" and there is a host of them in the country now; the breeds; and everyone who was out for the stuff....[166]

Irrespective of whether Dafoe's explanation was complete in itself, Brandon Liberals were discouraged by their failure to unseat McInnis. While the *Winnipeg Daily Tribune* suggested that McInnis had canvassed much more vigorously than his Liberal opponent who seems to have opposed that campaign technique,[167] Fraser, himself, attributed his defeat to the Tory money which "worked havoc" and the fact that "the prohibition question was very much against me with one or two exceptions and their influence was all powerful."[168] The fact that Sifton had not been able to assist must have been of considerable political consequence, although the Minister did not believe that his presence would have reversed the results. The fact that McInnis seemed to do less well in

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[165] McInnis had won by only eight votes in 1899.

[166] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 140, 11898, Dafoe to Sifton, August 3, 1903

[167] *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, July 8, 1903

[168] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 141, 113138, A.C. Fraser to Sifton, August 10, 1903. Whether a group of women, who met at First Baptist Church in Winnipeg, to pray from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on election day for those candidates who were thoroughly in sympathy with temperance movement were of any political signifance is not known. *Winnipeg Daily Tribune*, July 18, 1903

[169] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 252, 228, Sifton to A.C. Fraser, July 21, 1903

Brandon than his party did throughout the province was probably due to the fact that McInnis, the local candidate, was not as politically attractive as was the Roblin government in general. The strength or weakness of the local candidate was of considerable political significance.

Within a month of the provincial election, Sifton began preparing for his own upcoming federal contest which was expected some time late in 1903 or early in 1904.[170] The Prime Minister apparently wanted an early election, but most party workers were strongly opposed to a winter campaign.[171] However, the uncertainty of the date made early preparation mandatory. E. Blake Robertson was hired in late August 1903 as organizer for the Brandon constituency "at $100 a month and expenses."[172] His duties were to renumber the polls, establish a working committee in each poll and, above all, not to get into any "argument of any kind upon political matters."[173] In addition, Robertson was to prepare the traditional list of doubtful voters who would again receive the Free Press free of charge for the balance of the campaign and he was to report to the Minister

> as to the state of feeling towards myself and the Government here and any particular questions which

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[170] Sifton, meanwhile, had made a firm decision to refuse the attractive offer of a "safer" Ontario seat on the grounds that his abandonment of the fight in Brandon would demoralize the Liberal party throughout Manitoba. Ibid., vol. 253, 364-65, Sifton to Major J.M. Walsh, November 19, 1903

[171] Ibid., vol. 254, 376, Sifton to Walter Scott, December 26, 1903

[172] Ibid., vol. 252, 716, Sifton to E. Blake Robertson, August 20, 1903

[173] Ibid.

> want treatment. Let me know [how] our first batch of campaign literature took with the people.[174]

F.C. Potts[175] and R.E.A. Leech were also added to Sifton's constituency staff that fall.[176] By December 1, 1903, Robertson was able to report that he had visited fifty-six of the constituency's seventy-eight townships and that he had consulted key party workers in those townships. As a result, he

> had their ideas regarding the political complexion of each individual voter and the best means of influencing the doubtful ones besides getting full details regarding absentees.[177]

All this had been accomplished several months before the election was even announced![178]

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[174] Ibid., vol. 253, 465, Sifton to E. Blake Robertson, November 23, 1903. Robertson, by the way, was apprehensive lest he should appear to be too politically active before the election was ever called. Sifton reassured his organizer that he need not be concerned "in that County as they understand perfectly what it means to get ready for an election." Ibid., 557, Sifton to E. Blake Robertson, November 27, 1903

[175] While Sifton would hire Potts as a constituency organizer, he would not recommend him for a position as Mounted Police officer, the post which Potts really desired. Ibid., vol. 252, 444, Sifton to Kenneth Campbell, August 4, 1903

[176] The importance of Sifton's paid staff was suggested by an apparent attempt by the opposition to "buy them over." E. Blake Robertson reported in January 1904 that he had been offered "enough out of it to start...up in some business..." (ibid., vol. 170, 138009, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, January 11, 1904), if he, Robertson, would provide the Conservatives with useful information. R.E.A. Leech may also have been approached in a similar manner as it was rumoured, in mid 1904, that he had "sold out" to the Tories. Ibid., vol. 170, 138150, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, June 8, 1904. While there is no evidence to indicate that this rumour was well-founded, the tactic itself was obviously part of the political process in Brandon in 1904.

[177] Ibid., vol. 149, 118863, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, December 1, 1903

[178] One advantage that Sifton enjoyed was that he could secure free railway passes for his organizers. Leech, in his submission to

As in previous elections, much of the preliminary organizational activity was directed towards the "special interest" groups. For example, the approximately fifty Galician voters who lived in Brandon[179] would receive literature printed in their own language while one Immigration Department employee was directed to devote himself "largely to attending to the Galician business in the various districts as no one else understands it so well."[180] As a result, the Galicians were reportedly well in hand:

> they have been well treated in the past by the Liberal party and they will be willing to do the proper thing at the next election under the same circumstances.[181]

Sifton may have been more concerned, in 1903, with the attitude of the Orange Lodge, the local membership of which undoubtedly exceeded the number of Galician voters in his riding. F.C. Potts was hired specifically "to work among our yellow bellied friends,"[182] as a

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178. cont'd

have his free pass renewed for 1904, suggested significantly that "we may have to take a hurried trip after the elections are over."!! Ibid., vol. 165, 132832, R.E.A. Leech to J.B. Harkin, January 16, 1904

[179] Ibid., vol. 150, 120363, J.O. Smith to Sifton, November 23, 1903

[180] Ibid., vol. 252, 777, Sifton to J.B. Harkin, August 21, 1903

[181] Ibid., vol. 149, 118863, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, December 1, 1903. Although the educational requirements of the amended Manitoba Elections Act were still a major concern, the problem was not too serious in Brandon where there were only an estimated twelve to fifteen Galicians who were disfranchised by this particular test. Ibid., 118858, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, November 28, 1903

[182] Ibid., vol. 152, 122116-17, C.A. Young to Sifton, November 7, 1903. F.C. Potts was an officer of the Orange Lodge in Brandon and he seemed to play a prominent role in the proceedings of that Brotherhood. For instance, he was a prominent speaker at the July 12 celebrations at Souris in 1904, to which 150 Orangemen from Brandon alone journeyed via a special train. Brandon Daily Sun, July 13, 1904

prominent Winnipeg Liberal described the members of the Orange Lodge. In addition, the Liberals sought the assistance of W. Connolly, the Grand Secretary of the Orange Association of Manitoba, whom the Tories had reportedly attempted "to purge."[183] They were leaving no stones unturned as they thoroughly prepared for the upcoming election.[184]

The Liberals did not succeed, however, in resolving the problem of how to secure an acceptable voters list in 1904. Certainly J.W. Dafoe had repeatedly argued the need for a federally established voters list. However, as Laurier had explained in reply, the Liberals, in 1893, had adopted a policy of provincially established electoral systems and they could not meet Dafoe's request "without going back entirely upon which we all advocated...."[185] While Sifton strongly urged the provincial Liberals to do all in their power to secure as good a provincial list as possible, there were financial difficulties.

> It will be almost impossible to get a good revision of the Provincial lists as parties state they will not travel long distances to personally register their names and for the same reason it will be impossible to get witnesses to appear to give evidence against names we wish struck off unless we paid the witness the fees for which the Act provides and this would be an expensive undertaking.[186]

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[183] The Secretary reported that plans had already been completed "to have a canvass made amongst the members of our order...." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, mf. C-549, 111443, W. Connolly to A.P. Collier, December 16, 1903

[184] Ironically, the only major "issue" in the 1903 municipal election (in which Mayor Robert Hall was re-elected by acclamation) was whether or not the Tories were guilty of having introduced "politics" into the aldermanic contests. The Sun, of course, again portrayed Liberal hopefuls as "citizen" candidates while "Conservative" candidates were labelled as "party" people. Brandon Daily Sun, December 16, 1903

[185] PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 286, 77876, Laurier to Dafoe, October 21, 1903

[186] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 170, 138094, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, April 10, 1904

Although Sifton decided to have his own organizer "put up as good a fight as we can at small expense...,"[187] Manitoba Liberals, in general, decided to ignore the 1904 provincial enumeration in the hope that it would be supplanted by a federally prepared list.[188] Although the Laurier government tentatively decided to introduce such federal legislation,[189] that did not, in fact, occur. Thus, it was the Roblin Conservatives who supervised the preparation of the voters list for the 1904 campaign. However, Sifton, at least, had taken some precautionary steps.

The Conservatives, local Liberals feared, would attack Sifton on his "constituency record":

> ...the Conservatives are trying to raise the cry that you have never done anything for this town. They state that Daly got the Experimental Farm, the Industrial School and the Post Office built here, while all you have done since coming into power was to remove the Immigration sheds from here.[190]

Such criticisms could be politically effective and Sifton took every opportunity in 1904 to disprove the charge. For example, the 12th

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[187] Ibid., 138103, E. Blake Robertson to J.B. Harkin, April 17, 1904

[188] Part of Dafoe's objections to Sifton's proposal provides an insight into the "political thought" of that day.

> "Again if we were to take part in the revision of the lists we would doubtless see to the registration of the Galicians, and I think it very important that they should not be registered first in a list prepared by local government officials. If this is done you will find that a large proportion of them will be hopelessly confused as to whom they are indebted to for the privilege of the franchise."

Ibid., vol. 157, 127183, Dafoe to Sifton, April 9, 1904

[189] Ibid., vol. 259, 301, Sifton to Dafoe, June 21, 1904. The Justice Department did draw up such legislation.

[190] Ibid., vol. 170, 138038, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, February 10, 1904

Manitoba Dragoons were to have their summer drill at either Minnedosa or Brandon and (as the camp was worth an estimated $3,000 to the local community) Sifton insisted that it should be held in Brandon.[191] An earlier decision to close the "old" immigration sheds had caused some controversy: subsequently, Sifton--aided by his organizer who had delayed the submission of a local petition requesting the construction of such a shed "believing that political purposes would be better served, should action be taken by the government without any pressure being brought to bear..."[192]--announced that new facilities were now to be constructed. Brandon's council had also petitioned for a drill hall and armoury to be located in the city and again Sifton decided, on the eve of the election, to proceed: "I am very anxious to get the work started for obvious reasons."[193] In this rather direct and concrete manner, Sifton responded to Conservative accusations that he had done nothing for Brandon. Governments could move quickly when the circumstances warranted it!!

Ironically, while Sifton was busily engaged in the traditional task of buying electoral support with the voter's own tax dollars, his local organization was endangered by a growing internal division. There were apparently two distinct factions--the Clements and the Frasers--within the Liberal party in Brandon in 1903-4. A.C. Fraser, the ex-M.P.P., had been the Liberal candidate in 1903 and some of the internal conflict seems to have occurred as a result of that campaign. For example,

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[191] Ibid., vol. 257, 264, Sifton to Hon. Sir F.W. Borden, March 31, 1904

[192] Ibid., vol. 170, 138099, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, April 13, 1904

[193] Ibid., vol. 261, 128, Sifton to Hon. Sir D.H. McMillan, September 24, 1904

Fraser bitterly opposed the appointment of one Harry Clark to a minor government position as Clark and his brother had not supported him (Fraser) in the 1903 election--due to the fact that Fraser had allegedly refused Harry Clark's brother-in-law credit at his department store![194] Sifton refused to dismiss Clark solely on the protestations of Fraser, as he would alienate

> a lot of people who would justly consider that I ought to know my own business better than to appoint a man and then dismiss him.[195]

In addition, the two principal factions were at odds as a result of a business transaction in which the Frasers had sold some Carrot River land to "the Syndicate" of which the Clements were an integral part. As a result, "the Syndicate" had lost $20,000 of which the Clements' share was $6,000. As some believed that these losses were due to a deliberate act by A.C. Fraser, conflict and bitterness prevailed. Such internal conflict and division could be fatal for Sifton who now needed the support of all the factions.[196]

The Conservatives, meanwhile, were encountering real difficulties in their search for a suitable candidate. Both Premier Roblin[197] and ex-Premier Hugh John Macdonald[198] were rumoured to be possible opponents for Sifton. The name of Dr. McInnis, the M.P.P. for Brandon, was mentioned and John Hanbury, the unsuccessful mayoralty candidate, reportedly wanted the nomination.[199] However, the Conservatives obviously needed someone of considerable stature even if they hoped only to keep Sifton "tied up" in his own constituency in 1904.[200] Unfortunately, even that could be a difficult and costly task as "in tying you [Sifton] up many of their most usefull [sic] men on the stump would be tied up to."[201] Perhaps, for that reason, the Conservatives were willing to support R.L. Richardson, editor of the independent Winnipeg Daily Tribune, the surprise choice of the so-called "Convention of Independents."[202] Predictably, the pro-Sifton Sun denied that Richardson was, in any way, a farmer's candidate: the "farmers who were present, went merely through curiousity and took no part in the proceedings."[203] In fact, the Sun contended that the Winnipeg newspaper editor was really the candidate of

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[194] *Ibid.*, vol. 160, 128760, A.C. Fraser to Sifton, September 14, 1904

[195] *Ibid.*, vol. 261, 223, Sifton to K. Campbell, September 29, 1904

[196] Due to the factional differences in Brandon, the Minister of Interior was advised not to go "driving" with Fraser, as he had often done in the past: "If you must go take Dr. Harcourt he is outside the factions named."! *Ibid.*, vol. 169, 137018, A.E. Philp to Sifton, August 2, 1904

[197] Local opinion suggested that Roblin would be a stronger opponent than Macdonald had been due to his "ability to handle properly the shady side of a campaign." *Ibid.*, vol. 149, 11858, E. Blake Robertson to Sifton, November 28, 1903

[198] *Ibid.*, vol. 152, 122123, C.A. Young to Sifton, November 24, 1903

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[199] Ibid., vol. 146, 134782, J.D. McGregor to Sifton, September 28, 1904

[200] It is interesting to note that the fears of local Liberals that Sifton's role in the disappointing Alaskan boundary dispute and that the resultant anti-British, anti-preferential tariff sentiment would hurt politically seem to have been unfulfilled. Perhaps, the Laurier's government's proposal for the Grand Trunk Pacific was, as A.E. Philp had hoped, sufficient compensation. Ibid., vol. 148, 118033, A.E. Philp to Sifton, November 6, 1903

[201] Ibid., vol. 161, 130199, Robert Hall to Sifton, January 16, 1904. The Conservatives did not seem to succeed in that regard as Sifton campaigned extensively outside of his constituency, including points as far west as Lethbridge. Brandon Weekly Sun, October 13, 1904

[202] Roderick McKenzie, the general secretary of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association (and a prominent Liberal), repudiated any suggestion that the Grain Growers were supporting Richardson. He also stressed the fact that Virden's J.W. Scallion, an ex-president of the Grain Growers and the man who called the nominating convention, had no executive connection of any kind with the Grain Growers at that time. Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

> an aggregation of Populists, Socialists, grafters and half-breed Conservatives who cared nothing for the country or the city, if their own ends could be served.[204]

Certainly, R.L. Richardson was unable to "stem the tide" in the Brandon constituency where Sifton, as did his party throughout the country,[205] won with an even more comfortable margin than he had done in 1900.[206] However, to use the Minister's own words, it had been "an extremely warm contest"[207] and the fact that Sifton, as a Minister, was able to reward his own constituency by constructing immigration sheds and armouries on the eve of an election may well have been a determining factor. At least, Brandon electors had joined the majority of Manitobans in voting "ministerialist"[208] in both the 1903 and 1904 elections (even though that had meant electing a Conservative provincially and a Liberal federally) just as they had in 1899 and 1900. While Brandon may have simply been "in step," one suspects that Brandon voters were consciously striving to vote "ministerialist" so that their representative would be on the government side of the house. The fact that Sifton was the only "resident" candidate in both the 1900 and the 1904 federal election probably made that decision somewhat easier for Brandon electors. As it was, the Minister appeared to be politically secure at the conclusion of that 1904 election campaign.

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[204] Ibid., November 3, 1904

[205] The Liberals, in 1904, won seven of Manitoba's ten constituencies, an improvement upon 1900 when they had triumphed in four of seven. They also increased their total number in the House of Commons from 133 to 138 while the Conservatives declined from 80 to 75 members. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 96, 106

[206] Sifton defeated Richardson 3,625 to 2,804 which gave the Minister the rather decisive majority of 821 votes, an increase of approximately 150 votes over his margin in 1900.

[207] Perhaps, the contest was not as "easy" as it appears. Sifton, after the election, wrote: "We had an extremely warm contest in Brandon with a great many elements of serious uncertainty. The Conservative organization has not succeeded in coming to any conclusion as to how it happened." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 261, 695, Sifton to A.M. Peterson, November 23, 1904

[208] Sifton won the city with a majority of approximately 320 votes.

With the conclusion of the 1904 election, the politicians--Sifton included--turned their attention to the usual post-election problems. Positions had to be found for their paid political workers whose services were no longer required. Secondly, the possibility of protested elections had to be considered. The strategy in this area was very simple. If the Conservatives, who had lost seven of Manitoba's ten constituencies, decided to appeal any of those Liberal victories, the Liberal party would immediately protest the three Conservative wins in the North-West Territories.[209] The end result probably would be a "saw-off" whereby both sides would decide not to proceed. As a result, both parties tended to wait somewhat in a state of suspended animation for several months.

In the meantime, the annual municipal election in December 1904 generated little interest as it could nearly be described as a "non-event" in that the mayor and all but two aldermen were elected by acclamation. While Mayor Robert Hall did not seek re-election, John W. Fleming, the Liberal whose election in 1902 had been voided on a relatively minor technicality, was elected without opposition. That a new candidate should win by acclamation was rather unusual. Perhaps the circumstances of his earlier election and Sifton's very decisive victory in Brandon a few weeks before discouraged local Conservatives from putting a candidate into the field.

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[209] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 261, 997, Sifton to H.M. Howell, December 7, 1904

Although one might well have expected that the two elections of 1903 and 1904 would be followed by a period of political stability and relative inactivity, the sudden eruption of the 1905 Schools Question and Sifton's subsequent resignation from the Laurier ministry dramatically disrupted that winter's tranquility. The nature of the legislation designed to govern the formation of the two new proposed provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, had proven to be troublesome for some time. After an apparent agreement had been secured, Sifton, the principal spokesman for Western Canada, had departed to the United States in search of medical relief for his defective hearing. During his absence, the proposed legislation respecting separate schools was seemingly altered. Sifton returned immediately to Ottawa in February 1905, and a major political crisis ensued.

Sifton's basic position was that the modified system of separate schools currently established in the North-West Territories should be perpetuated in the legislation proclaiming the two new provinces. Instead, he found that the proposal, which had been drafted by the Roman Catholic Minister of Justice, Honorable Charles Fitzpatrick, was suspiciously vague and, as such, unacceptable.

> I do not myself with all my experience in construing and arguing clauses of this kind profess to know what it means and the fact that it was drawn by Fitzpatrick does not add anything to my confidence....
>
> There are two points that seems to me to be a difficulty in the present draft. First, it does not seem to me at all clear that the central authority will have the power to regulate the separate school, prescribe text books and qualifications of teachers....

> Another and serious difficulty is as to the last clause which provides for the sharing up of the proceeds of the public school lands. This question was never discussed before....[210]

Unfortunately for Sifton, Laurier was not to be easily persuaded: instead, the Prime Minister even hinted that he, too, would resign, should the Minister of Interior do so. While Sifton decided to resign irrespective of the consequences,[211] he did not encourage others to follow his example. In fact, his discouraged W.S. Fielding from doing so.[212] Thus, the split within the Liberal government was minimized.

Although Sifton seemed now to be "out of step" with the Laurier government, his constituents were strongly in favour of their member's views on separate schools. Groups such as the Orange Lodge had been displeased in the past with any proposal, or hint of proposal, which would enhance the position of separate schools and the Orange Lodge rallied to the support of Sifton in this instance.[213] Other constituents wrote urging the Brandon M.P. not to compromise on any point. However, Sifton the practical politician, was less rigid: "...the simple course in politics is not to compromise anything, but unfortunately it is not the road to practical progress."[214] When Sifton did negotiate what he regarded to be an acceptable compromise, he urged Dafoe to see that the

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[210] Ibid., vol. 263, 209-12, Sifton to Dafoe, February 25, 1905

[211] Ibid., 228-29, Sifton to Dafoe, February 27, 1905

[212] Ibid., 277, Sifton to W.S. Fielding, March 1, 1905

[213] Brandon Daily Sun, March 3, 1905. The Orange Lodge urged every western voter to write to his M.P. to indicate his opposition to the separate schools provisions.

[214] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 263, 576, Sifton to A.C. Fraser, March 7, 1905

Winnipeg clergy, as a key group, accepted it.[215] Should the compromise not be approved, all might be lost.

While Sifton concerned himself with the terms of the legislation and its implication, Dafoe was more conscious of the possible political significance for Sifton of the decision to resign. Sifton's political power and influence--both federally and provincially--had been largely due to his prominence in the cabinet and to the patronage that he controlled as a result of that position. As a result, he had won both the elections of 1900 and 1904 with significant majorities and he had, in the early years of his term as minister, played a predominant role--both in public and "behind the scenes"--in provincial politics. In fact, even municipal politicians had attempted to persuade Sifton of the need to ensure that he had a "good council" and, certainly, local Liberals were very prominent in the several mayoralty contests that occurred between 1899 and 1905. However, Sifton's interest in provincial politics had become less evident during the course of the 1903 election--the point at which the Greenway Liberals had reached a new low ebb. Now his decision to resign from the cabinet[216] might well lessen his political influence at all levels of political activity. Dafoe feared that Sifton's decision would directly benefit the opposition: it would "put new life into the Tories and will encourage them to shove the protests. However, I have no doubt you have fully considered the situation and have counted the cost."[217] Nevertheless, as of February 27, 1905, Clifford Sifton was no longer the Minister of Interior. Instead, he had suddenly reverted to the role of "private member" (albeit extraordinary!). Whether politics in Brandon would vary significantly in "The Age of Sifton, M.P." from what it had in "The Age of Sifton, Minister of the Interior" had become the pressing question of the moment.

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[215] *Ibid.*, 660-63, Sifton to Dafoe, March 11, 1905

[216] David Hall has suggested that Sifton's resignation was caused by several factors in addition to the controversial Schools Question itself: he had been denied the Justice portfolio; he was weary of his duties as Minister of the Interior; and there were rumours that new evidence of "corruption" and of "an affair" was to be publicly revealed . Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905," 878. It is interesting to note that Sifton had, in fact, discussed the possibility of retiring from politics as early as 1899. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 231, 796, Sifton to I. Campbell, April 7, 1899

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[217] *Ibid.*, vol. 177, 143653-54, Dafoe to Sifton, February 26, 1905. A recent study suggests that Sifton's resignation on this issue did, at least, encourage the Conservatives to oppose the federal government's school policy more vigorously. Manoly R. Lupul, *The Roman Catholic Church and the North-west School Question: a study in church-state relations in western Canada*, 1875-1905 (Toronto 1974), 182

Chapter III

Politics in Brandon During the Era of Clifford Sifton, M.P., 1905-11

Although the years from 1905 to 1911 constituted, to some degree, an anti-climatic period in the political career of Clifford Sifton, the city itself continued to experience the steady growth which had begun in the early years of "the Sifton era." For example, Brandon's population in 1911 was 13,839, an increase of 32.97% from the 1906 census total of 10,408.[1] In addition, the city's significance as a railway centre was even more marked by the end of the "Sifton era." While the C.P.R., with its labour force of 800 regular and an additional 300-400 summer employees,[2] still constituted the city's largest "industry," the C.N.R., in 1911, also selected Brandon to be its divisional centre between Winnipeg and Regina. As a result, this railway immediately commenced the construction of a new station and the Prince Edward Hotel, a combined unit worth an estimated $500,000[3] which would serve for the next sixty years as a city landmark. The city, in addition, was the terminus for the Great Northern which provided southern connections to Minneapolis and St. Paul. In fact, Brandon was served by 27 trunk and branch lines over which 246 passenger and 489 freight trains entered and departed each week.[4] The "Wheat City" was admirably suited to serve

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1. Census of Canada, 1911. This increase in growth was significantly less, however, than in the preceding five years when the city had expanded dramatically from 5,620 to 10,408, an increase of 85.2%.

2. Brandon Daily Sun, November 1, 1912

3. Ibid.

4. While these statistics were reported in 1912, one can assume that the figures for 1911 would have been comparable. Ibid.

as a transportation centre for the surrounding rich agricultural area which reportedly produced some nineteen million plus bushels annually[5] and which contained an estimated million head of livestock.[6] Thus, Brandon continued to enjoy its earlier won recognition as a "farm market centre"--as the "leading horse trading centre in the West"[7] and as the location of the now-renowned summer and winter agricultural fairs.[8]

As the city grew--both as an agricultural and railway centre as well as in population--the nature of the community underwent certain changes that could be of political consequence. For example, the growth of the trade union movement was one of the most evident developments of the latter portion of the "Sifton era." While trade unions had been organized for several years, their "public profile" seem to have become more pronounçed in the post-1905 era. For example, the first ever Labor Day celebration was held in September 1907 as six unions participated in a parade, in a sports competition and in the "baby show" which followed![9] By 1908, the trade union movement was sufficiently aggressive to strike the "mighty C.P.R."--the city's largest employer and the country's most powerful corporation.[10] By 1911, the Bricklayer's Union was able to announce that eighty members had attended a banquet at which perhaps twenty might have attended "a couple of years ago."[11] In addition, the Brandon Trades and Labor Council seriously considered the possibility of supporting their own candidate in the 1911 municipal election.[12] It would appear, as a labour spokesman contended, "that unionism was a growing force"[13] in Brandon by 1911.

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[5] 50% of the wheat produced in Manitoba was reportedly grown within a fifty mile radius of Brandon. Ibid., July 20, 1907

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., November 1, 1912

[8] What had originally been an annual autumn event became the "summer" fair in 1896. The winter fair began in 1905 after its own "winter fair building" had been constructed. That building, however, was temporarily occupied by the residents of the Brandon Hospital For the Insane after the disastrous November 1910 fire which destroyed that facility. Ibid.

[9] The unions represented in that 1907 parade were the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiner's, the Maintenance of Way Employees, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the Barbers Union, the Plumbers and Steamfitters, and the Cigar Makers Union. Ibid., September 3, 1907

The character of Brandon as a predominantly British community was also somewhat altered during the first decade of the twentieth century. Whereas 83.27% of Brandon residents had British origins in 1901, that portion of the city's population had declined to 74.02% at the time of the 1911 census.[14] It is interesting to note that the decline of the Irish from 23.29% to 14.21% was the most marked. Furthermore, while the British character of Brandon was diminishing, the Austrian-Hungarian community grew rather dramatically from 1.80% in 1901 to 8.87% in 1911 and the appearance of the often-called "peasants in sheep skin clothing" would be one of the significant developments of the Clifford Sifton era. As the much maligned "Galicians" constituted only an approximate one-third of this 8.87%, it would appear that their subsequent impact--in political terms--upon the Brandon community was somewhat disproportionate to their numbers.

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[10] Ibid., August 5, 1908

[11] Ibid., October 7, 1911

[12] Ibid., November 17, 1911

[13] Ibid., October 7, 1911

[14] Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 1

Surprisingly, the Anglican Church, if not the British community, was in a numerically stronger position by 1911 with 25.49% of Brandon's population identified as members or adherents in contrast to 21.49% in 1901. However, the Presbyterians, despite a decline from 28.63% to 25.76%, still remained as the most numerous within the city. Meanwhile, the Methodists had also suffered a loss from 22.62% to 16.92% although they retained their third place position. The fourth largest group in 1911 were the Roman Catholics who, by expanding from 7.69% to 9.78%, had by-passed the Baptists. The fact that some 3.77% of the city's population were identified as members of the "Greek Church" in 1911 was also evidence of the slowly changing character of the community.[15] While these statistical changes were of relatively minor proportion, an apparent trend was nevertheless established. Although Brandon could still be regarded as an outpost of English speaking Protestant Ontario in 1911,[16] its future identity was sufficiently in doubt that this issue would become politically significant in the latter years of the "Clifford Sifton era."

In fact, Sifton's resignation from the Laurier cabinet in 1905 had been primarily due to the controversial issue of separate schools and the subsequent question of the nature of Western Canada's future character and identity. However, Brandon's M.P., even after the crisis had been resolved, declined to rejoin that particular cabinet.[17] Therefore, Brandon, for the next few years, was represented on the governmental side of the House, although not in the cabinet. As Sifton had established his residence in Ottawa during his term as Minister and as he did not return to reside in Brandon after his resignation in 1905, Brandon's Member--who now even visited the West much less frequently than he had done when he was the region's spokesman in the cabinet--became virtually a non-resident representative. Naturally, Sifton's role in Brandon politics was affected by these developments. However, the federal election had just been completed; the schools question was seemingly resolved for the moment; and the anticipated federal by-elections in Manitoba did not materialize.[18] Therefore, the significance of Sifton's new (and presumably lessened) political stature could not immediately be measured.

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Brandon, it is interesting to note, was governed municipally in 1911 by a mayor and ten aldermen, six of whom had been born in Ontario. Of the remaining five municipal leaders, two were born in England, one in Scotland, one in New Brunswick and one in Porto Rico. Brandon Daily Sun, January 3, 1911

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[17] While Laurier rather anxiously sought Sifton's re-entry into the cabinet prior to the 1908 federal election, their negotiations failed when the Prime Minister adamantly refused to restructure the cabinet as Sifton desired:

> "Even the slight change of replacing the most aged members seems to be abandoned for the present."

PAC, J.S. Willison Papers, folder 286, 27483-88, Sifton to J.S. Willison, August 27, 1907

[18] J.W. Dafoe had feared that Sifton's resignation would embolden the Tories to push their election protests more strenuously and he argued (again in vain) that the federal government must establish its jurisdictional right to establish the federal voting lists:

> "Nothing but the manner in which the Grand Trunk Pacific cry appealed to the electors saved us from a bad defeat last November; but if we have to fight any by-elections on the list to be made next month with the added disadvantage of the unpopularity of the school legislation for the new provinces it will go very hard with us, I fear...."

PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 36, 97602, Dafoe to Laurier, May 17, 1905

What was most immediately notable about politics in Brandon in 1905 was the seemingly sudden emergence of an effective and presumably non-partisan "pressure group" in the form of a "Citizens' League." This civic body was initially concerned with moral problems: for example, a Citizens' League delegation of some 150 appeared before council in early May 1905 to demand that the city's east end "disorderly houses" be closed immediately.[19] "Intoxicated," perhaps, with this success, Brandon citizens immediately launched a petition and "letters to the Editor" campaign[20] against the current practice of granting municipal tax concessions to new businesses.[21] However, the limitations of "citizen power" and "pressure politics" became evident later that same year when this same group failed, firstly, to persuade the Grand Trunk Pacific to route this new transcontinental line through Brandon;[22] and, secondly, in their seemingly half-hearted attempt to influence that year's mayoralty election.[23] While organized public opinion had failed to influence the management of the Grand Trunk Pacific, there were other possibilities for the provision of additional railway service for Brandon[24] and any civic authority who seemed reluctant to grant the "necessary" concessions[25] could be subjected to considerable criticism and pressure.[26] Thus, while the non-partisan citizen groups were not necessarily consistent in their positions, they were becoming a regular feature of municipal politics in Brandon by 1905-6.

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[19] Apparently some sixty prostitutes had been "imported" into Brandon (which allegedly was the most notorious "city of sin" east of the Rocky Mountains) for the 1904 Victoria Day weekend. These citizens were determined that the Queen's birthday should not again be commemorated in such an "un-Victorian" fashion! Despite the courageous arguments of Alderman George Coldwell (who would soon enter provincial politics) that the forced relocation of prostitutes was not a solution, Brandon's "madame's" did reportedly "move on." Brandon Daily Sun, May 16, 1905

[20] This was the first noted use of the "letter to the Editor" technique--a tactic which would become a normal feature of pressure politics in the future.

[21] As a result, the provincial government--despite the opposition of Brandon's Mayor Fleming--concurred with the petition that municipal tax concession could be granted only with the approval of local taxpayers. Brandon Daily Sun, March 21, 1905

[22] Ibid., July 22, 1905. One suspects that the activities of the local citizens group may have been designed to embarass Clifford Sifton and the Liberal party for their failure to secure such a decision.

One of the interesting features of politics in Brandon in 1906 was the growing evidence of a definite inter-relationship between municipal and provincial politics. The next provincial election was

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23. However, the extent of the "Citizens' League" involvement in that campaign can not be clearly determined. Mayor Fleming, the prominent Liberal druggist-horse dealer, defeated ex-Mayor Dr. McDiarmid (a fellow Liberal) by a vote of 955 to 319. The Sun, a Mayor Fleming supporter, suggested that McDiarmid's refusal to endorse "local option" may have disappointed some members of the Citizens' League. Ibid., December 16, 1905. Nevertheless, the total vote in 1905 of 1,274 would exceed the total votes of 1904 or 1906 by 500 plus votes and that increased electoral interest may have been due to the public interest generated by the activities of the Citizens' League in 1905.

24. There was a possibility that the Canadian Northern would decide to build westward from Brandon to Calgary, and also that Brandon might become a divisional point in a north-south line such as the proposed Brandon, Saskatchewan and Hudson's Bay Railway which would link the American border with northern Manitoba. Ibid., August 4, 1905

25. The "concessions" in question may have been land grants for railway rights of way, the closure of certain sectors of the city to other traffic or for running rights to existing access lines.

26. For example, Alderman Coldwell (whom the Sun and other critics described as the "voice of the C.P.R.") was reportedly "very cooly received" by several hundred Brandonites when he had the temerity to oppose such concessions at a public meeting. Brandon Daily Sun, August 22, 1906

"due" in 1907, and the "jockeying" between Roblin's Conservative government and the predominantly Liberal Brandon council became more noticeable as that election drew nearer. For example, the Roblin government, in 1906, was seriously considering the demands of the increasingly influential Manitoba Grain Growers' Association for a government owned telephone system: meanwhile, a proposal by Brandon's council that every local governing body should be empowered to contract with any company of its choice for the provision of street railway, electrical, telegraph and telephone services could hinder the establishment of such a government owned facility. Premier Roblin, in fact, contended that "the master hand"[27] was at work in this instance. Partisan political considerations were also evident in the "Brandon Normal School School incident" in 1906. Although Premier Roblin reassured a concerned delegation of citizens--led by Dr. S.W. McInnis, M.P.P.--that the omission of a fall opening date from the Normal School calendar was simply a matter of clerical error,[28] the hostile Sun insisted that had it not been "for the activity of Mayor Fleming and the people of Brandon... the Normal would have gone from the city for good."[29] The Sun, of course, was anxious to applaud the actions of Brandon's Liberal Mayor and to belittle the role of the local Conservative M.P.P. as well as the government of which he was a part. Mayor Fleming himself attempted to capitalize upon the opportunity provided when unduly severe winter blizzards closed western Manitoba railway lines in late 1906[30] -early 1907 and Brandon, as a result, found itself in the midst of a severe fuel shortage[31]--although supplies were available at Neepawa, only fifty miles distant. On the occasion of the second major blizzard, Fleming--now the local Liberal candidate--attempted to blame his Conservative opponents for the failure of the Canadian Northern--the "Roblin Government's railroad"[32]--to supply Brandon's fuel needs.

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[27] Ibid., February 6, 1906

[28] The theory was that Brandon students would thus be compelled to enroll in Manitou's Normal School. Unfortunately, the Manitou Normal School, which had been constructed in the Hon. Robert Roger's own constituency, had failed to draw a significant number of students and the Sun suggested that Rogers was trying to rectify that embarrassing situation by closing the Brandon school. Ibid., August 14, 1906

[29] Ibid., August 7, 1906. The relocation of the Normal School would have constituted a "loss" for Brandon of some $10,000-$15,000 in the opinion of E.L. Christie. Ibid., July 27, 1906

> Fancy a railway...financed by the government, saying to Brandon: If you want our wood you must dig out our line.... I say there is no excuse for the disgraceful condition of the road, and I say the government under the terms of the contract, are responsible....[33]

Manitoba's severe winter weather could thus be politically significant--at least on the eve of a provincial election campaign!

The close inter-relationship that had existed between municipal and provincial politics in 1906 was probably a factor in the rather bizarre series of events that surrounded that year's mayoralty election.

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30. Mayor Fleming, who would in the very near future be nominated as a provincial Liberal candidate, dramatically sought the Prime Minister's intervention in order to prevent "further suffering" (PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 438, 116908, J.W. Fleming to Laurier, December 18, 1906) and Laurier did request both William Mackenzie of the Canadian Northern (ibid., 116911, Laurier to W. Mackenzie, December 19, 1906) and Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, the president of the C.P.R. (ibid., 116910, Laurier to Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, December 19, 1906), to allow him to assure Brandon's mayor (and Laurier's fellow Liberal) that the "Wheat City's" needs would be met immediately.

31. As a result, the Brandon Electric Light Company was forced to discontinue operation for several days, due to the fuel-shortage.

32. Brandon Daily Sun, January 17, 1907

33. Winnipeg Daily Tribune, February 28, 1907

While the pro-Liberal Sun had suggested that Mayor Fleming would be elected by acclamation,[34] ward one Alderman R.D. Evans[35] and Alderman Dr. Harcourt[36] soon declared their candidacies for the mayoralty. Then, in what must have been a most confusing series of events, Mayor Fleming--followed by Alderman Evans--withdrew[37] at which point, S.E. Clement,[38] a thirty-nine year old lawyer, entered the contest. As Alderman Dr. Harcourt's subsequent withdrawal was technically unacceptable, both Clement's and Harcourt's name remained on the ballot![39]

While the Clement faction had "captured" the mayoralty, their rival--J.W. Fleming--now emerged as the local Liberal candidate in the 1907 provincial election--an opportunity which some observers may not have necessarily viewed as an honour! While McInnis and the Roblin government as a whole had been in office for eight years, there was little evidence to indicate that the voters were anxious for a

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34. Brandon Daily Sun, November 23, 1906

35. R.D. Evans, a sometime Conservative and a self-proclaimed spokesman of the working class, announced that he had become a candidate at the urging of a delegation of trade unionists. However, Joseph Waldron, the secretary of the local Trades and Labor Council, denied that they "were bringing out a man in the coming municipal election." Ibid., December 8, 1906

36. Dr. Harcourt was one of the prominent Brandon Liberals who reportedly had remained detached from both of the Clement and Fleming "factions."

37. Perhaps Fleming did not want to run the risk of defeat on the eve of a provincial election at which he hoped to be the Liberal candidate?

38. Clement, who was a member of one of Brandon's most prominent families, had served previously on the local school board. He subsequently won the Brandon constituency for the Liberals in the 1915 provincial election, having failed to unseat the Hon. George Coldwell in 1914.

39. Clement defeated his "non-opponent" Harcourt by a vote of 498 to 186.

change.[40] The city's and the province's population was continuing to expand and Manitobans still looked forward with great anticipation. The Liberals' principal hope in 1907 was, therefore, to convince the local voters that Brandon itself had not received its fair share of the "goodies" and that the present M.P.P. was too weak personally to promote the community's interests. Thus, the decision of the Roblin government to locate the Agricultural College (which the Liberals in 1903 had promised to Brandon) in Tuxedo;[41] the "near loss" of the Brandon Normal School; and the "disgraceful" service of the Canadian Northern, for which the Roblin government was held accountable, were all stressed. The Conservative candidate was described as "a gentleman who has no pull at Winnipeg":[42] in fact, one Sun headline even declared that "McInnis has Betrayed Brandon."[43] The fact that McInnis had never been appointed to the cabinet was also emphasized by the Liberals as Edward Brown, the provincial Liberal leader, told an eager Brandon audience that their city deserved representation in the cabinet[44] while the Sun repeatedly described J.W. Fleming as "a man of cabinet rank...."[45] It had become

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40. M. Donnelly has stated that the Liberal party "never had a chance in the spring election of 1907...." M. Donnelly, Dafoe of the Free Press (Toronto 1968), 55. If this is so, the decision of the Liberals in Brandon to focus directly on McInnis, rather than on the government per se, would be politically sound.

41. The Liberals charged that the selection of the Tuxedo site would personally benefit both Roblin and Rogers who allegedly had land holdings in that area. Brandon Daily Sun, February 28, 1907

42. Ibid., February 18, 1907

43. Ibid., March 5, 1907

44. Ibid., February 28, 1907

45. Ibid., February 18, 1907

a campaign to determine which man could do most for Brandon.[46] The Liberals had located what they believed to be the weakest point in their opponent's armour and they attacked accordingly.

Ironically, while the Liberals contended that J.W. Fleming's record as a municipal politician was evidence of his ability to serve the Brandon electors, that record also provided the Conservatives with a target at which to aim. Consequently, Fleming, who should have been the attacker, was placed on the defensive by the Tory accusations that he was to blame for "wrecking the credit of the city more than any other alderman who ever sat on council."[47] Fleming, himself, was conscious of the political implications of many of the decisions which he had been forced to make in the past.

> Chas. Whillier of Somerville and Co. would not vote for me because I as a provisional director of the Transfer R.R. advocated it being put near some of his property. J.C. Smith because I as Mayor insisted that his son Hunter should carry out his contract for cement with the City, and because the Council gave a contract to Brown & Mitchell for brass goods of the kind the City wanted, when his son Hunter had tendered on what our Engineer had said was inferior goods at a lower price. Dr. McDiarmid because I gave him such a whipping in Mayoralty contest and at the Convention.[48]

A career as a municipal politician could easily prove to be more of a political liability than an asset!

A provincial Liberal candidate could also be held accountable by the voters for any failings of the federal Liberal government. Although the local Liberals tried to avoid any discussion of federal issues and although Sifton himself played no evident role in the 1907 election, the Conservatives eagerly concentrated on the failure of the Laurier government to resolve the Manitoba boundary question. For example, the Hon. Robert Rogers dwelt on this issue when he addressed Dr. McInnis's nominating convention.[49] The Manitoba Liberal leader himself was well aware of the significance of the boundaries issue: "We have probably more to fear from this question than from any other...."[50] The voters, it was feared, could not (or would not) distinguish between party representatives at the two political levels.

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[46] Fleming, himself, unabashedly claimed that "I have secured as a private citizen more for Brandon than my opponent has in his official capacity." Ibid., February 27, 1907

[47] Winnipeg Daily Tribune, March 6, 1907

[48] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 179, 145496-97, J.W. Fleming to Sifton, April 25, 1907

While the Conservatives seemingly enjoyed a significant advantage in the 1907 provincial election, the Brandon Liberals did succeed in forcing the Conservatives to fight on their terms. At least, McInnis responded to Liberal accusations by listing what monies the Roblin government had spent in Brandon: at the provincial asylum; the provincial jail; and the Land Titles office. In addition, the Hon. Robert Rogers announced, during the campaign, that the government would build two new bridges locally over the Assiniboine. The Conservatives were attempting to buy the voters with their own money, just as Clifford Sifton had done in the 1904 federal election. Perhaps the key question was whether or not enough of the voters' money was being spent in this manner.

What is immediately evident is that political strength is not readily transferable from one level to another. The Liberals had swept every Brandon poll in the 1904 federal election: the Conservatives won a majority of those same polls[51] in 1907 as their allegedly weak candidate defeated his Liberal challenger by the decisive vote of 1,210 to 1,081.[52] McInnis, who had never served in municipal politics and whose personal record as a M.P.P. had been much criticized, had thus easily overcome J.W. Fleming, a prominent businessman and municipal politician, at a time when his own party's numbers were being slightly reduced.[53]

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[49] Brandon Daily Sun, February 23, 1907

[50] PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 439, 117141, Edward Brown to Laurier, December 26, 1906

While the simplest explanation for the re-election of McInnis was the fact that Brandon voters were voting "ministerialist," Brandon Liberals contended that "thousands upon thousands of dollars were poured into this constituency...to defeat ex-Mayor Fleming."[54] The Conservatives, they alleged, had "bought" McInnis's victory by fraudulent methods.[55]

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51. McInnis was particularly strong in the east end of the city, an area in which the Liberals had earlier made a special appeal at the municipal level with their "workingmen's candidates." McInnis, however, in 1907, stressed that he, too, was a friend of the working class and that the government's fair wages act, to be enforced by a fair wages officer, would help guarantee equitable wages on all government projects. Brandon Daily Sun, February 27, 1907

52. This margin of 129 votes was relatively decisive in view of the fact that McInnis's majority in 1903 had been only 42 and that it had been only 8 in 1899.

53. The Conservatives, who had thirty-one seats in 1903, were now reduced to twenty-eight. However, Edward Brown, (whose party now had thirteen members) was not elected. Morton, Manitoba A History, 286, 295

54. Brandon Daily Sun, March 8, 1907. While Roblin described the 1907 campaign as "the most bitter and unscrupulous in all my experience," the Brandon contest does not appear to have been abnormal in any respect. Winnipeg Daily Tribune, March 8, 1907

55. "Vote-buying" had become more complex with the introduction of the secret ballot. The technique in 1907, according to newspaper accounts, required that the party worker provide the voter with a pre-marked ballot which that same voter would subsequently substitute for the unmarked ballot which he received at the polling station. After having cast the pre-marked ballot, he would return the unmarked ballot to the party worker who would, in turn, pay him for his efforts. Winnipeg Daily Tribune, March 5, 1907

Fleming, in addition, blamed the divisive factional disputes within the Liberal party: in his opinion, he had been opposed by the "Clement gang because I am living and apparently in their way. Not only did this last bunch not vote for me, but did all in their power to induce others not to vote for the Liberal candidate."[56] The peculiar circumstances of local party politics combined with the obvious advantage of being a ministerialist candidate (regardless of the weak image which he personally might have) had led to McInnis's re-election in 1907--a year in which the government was to be easily returned to office.

Although the Liberals had failed to carry the Brandon constituency, some of their criticisms may have found their mark. At least, the mid-1907 appointment of Dr. S.W. McInnis to the cabinet as Provincial Secretary and subsequently as Manitoba's first Minister of Education seemed to be in response to Liberal assertions that Brandon--as the province's second city--deserved representation in the cabinet and that a separate Ministry of Education should be established.[57] Brandon had a new found political stature--thanks perhaps to J.W. Fleming and his fellow Liberal critics!!

Ironically, Dr. McInnis had little time to enjoy any sense of personal satisfaction as he died--after a brief illness--in early November 1907. While McInnis took the unusual step of issuing a farewell address to his constituents--in which he stressed the need for more parks, for governmental support of hospitals and the arts, the need for a Ruthenian school for young immigrant children, and the desirability of a system of municipal ownership of electrical and street car systems, his colleagues' most immediate concern was with the choice of his successor. As the constituency would presumably expect that McInnis's successor would be invited to join the cabinet, the selection of the local candidate was not left entirely in local hands. In fact, the final decision was undoubtedly made by Premier Roblin himself after the two "hopefuls"--Aldermen Coldwell and Wallace--had visited him in Winnipeg. The announcement that the forty-nine year old veteran alderman and lawyer, George R. Coldwell[58] had been appointed Provincial Secretary and Minister of Education was followed a few days later by his nomination as the Conservative candidate for the upcoming by-election.[59] With Coldwell's election by acclamation on November 25, 1907, a new era in provincial politics in Brandon had begun.

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[56] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 179, 145496-97, J.W. Fleming to Sifton, April 25, 1907

[57] The Department of Education had been the responsibility of the Attorney-General until 1907.

McInnis, in his farewell address, had stressed the need for increased governmental involvement in the economic and social life of the community and for municipal ownership of certain utilities. The principle of municipal ownership was also supported in 1907 by Alderman S.C. Doran (a fellow Conservative and one of the two self-styled working class spokesman on council) who fought single-handedly--but unsuccessfully--in favour of a municipally owned natural gas delivery

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58. George Coldwell had been born in Durban County, Ontario, in 1858. After graduating from the University of Toronto, Coldwell moved to Winnipeg in 1882 and to Brandon in 1884. A devout Anglican, Coldwell was elected alderman in 1888 and he served thereafter for twenty years, during which time he was opposed on only two occasions. He was, in the words of his obituary, "the most outstanding figure in the life of this city...." Brandon Daily Sun, January 24, 1924

59. It was later rumoured that Wallace had received a "consolation prize"--that he would receive the local Conservative nomination for the next federal election. Ibid., September 24, 1908. If so, that promise was to be broken!

system.[60] However, local public opinion--at least as expressed by the newly-formed Ratepayers' Association--was primarily concerned with the need for a more "businesslike" civic administration.[61] While this new association did not have any apparent impact on the 1907 municipal election,[62] it did help "persuade" council in 1908 to reverse its decision on the choice of site for the new city hall.[63] They were, however, less successful in the instance of the "First Street Bridge controversy."[64] While the Ratepayers' Association, on behalf of an aroused public, called for the dismissal of the city engineer and for the election of more competent businessmen to council,[65] the 1908 municipal election does not seem to have been significantly affected

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60. Instead, a Cleveland based natural gas company was granted an exclusive twenty year contract to serve the Brandon community. Ibid., April 12, 1907

61. The nature of this Association is difficult to determine. While W. Richardson, the president of the local Trades and Labor Council, was a prominent member, one suspects that his presence was primarily for "window dressing." In fact, the bulk of the Association's criticism was directed against the two aldermen, Doran and Evans, who most frequently proclaimed themselves to be the champion of the working men.

62. S.E. Clement decisively defeated R.D. Evans by a vote of 905 to 468. The east end "pro-working class" ex-Alderman even failed to carry his own ward. Brandon Daily Sun, December 10, 1907

63. The controversy resulted from the fact that Alderman Doran owned the property upon which the new city hall was to be constructed. As aldermen, under the terms of the Municipal Act, were prevented from entering into any contract with their own municipality, a large delegation presented a petition (which was presumably organized by the Ratepayers' Association) in protest. As a result, city council quietly selected another site. Ibid., January 28, 1908

64. The cost of this bridge, which was being financed jointly by the city, the C.P.R., and the province, proved to be significantly higher than originally estimated: Brandon's share was some $25,000-$30,000 greater than expected.

65. Brandon Daily Sun, December 4, 1908

by this incident.[66] In fact, the Association seems to have disappeared from public view at that point in time. Without the lure of potential political power to nurture them, citizen organizations--such as the Ratepayers' Association and the previously noted Moral and Social Reform League--tended to rise and fall in "meteroic" fashion.

The 1908 federal election contest in the Brandon constituency was significantly different from those of 1900 and 1904. Clifford Sifton was no longer a powerful cabinet minister: in fact, there appeared to be some real doubt as to whether he would stand again and

> I may add that if I were willing to become a candidate I doubt if I would feel at liberty to accept nomination as a straight supporter of the Government.[67]

The consequences of Sifton's altered political status could be severe. At least one political observer expressed the fear that "if you [Sifton] do not return to the Cabinet we are practically lost insofaras Manitoba is concerned at the next General Election."[68] While the political significance of Sifton's absence from the Laurier cabinet cannot be determined, it would appear that his own indecision probably caused him to pay less attention to the work of preliminary political organization than he would normally have done. For example, he hired only one man, R.E. McCaw of Griswold, to assist with the registration of voters and to report on the local political climate whereas he had had three men in the field well in advance of the 1904 election. In addition, while Sifton normally worked closely with his local organization, there were complaints in 1908 that the "local [Liberal] organization was ignored in the making of the lists"[69] and, as a result, local Liberals "did not turn out very well."[70] Sifton, in 1908, was not functioning as the efficient, astute politician that he was.

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[66] A "letter to the editor" suggested that Alderman Doran (who was subsequently defeated by H.L. Adolph by a vote of 884 to 649) was the Ratepayers' Association's "second choice." Ibid., December 10, 1908. This, however, seems unlikely as Doran had been one of the Association's principal "targets" at the time of its formation in 1907. In retrospect, the most interesting feature of this municipal election was the election of Harry Cater as alderman for a one year term. Cater, who had been defeated twice previously, was to become the city's most successful municipal politician.

[67] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 181, 146382-83, Sifton to J.C. Rattray, December 24, 1907. Sifton's main reservations, at that moment, were with the Laurier government's position on Manitoba's financial subsidy and the boundary issue.

[68] Ibid., 146190-92, Thos. Metcalfe to Sifton, June 4, 1907

In fact, Sifton's decision to contest the October 26, 1908, federal election in Brandon was probably not made until late August. On August 22, he informed his old friend and political ally, J.D. McGregor, that he would be returning to Brandon in three weeks "and I think that I shall need you very much when I arrive."[71] Six days later, Sifton hired E.C. Fisher, an Elkhorn merchant who had extensive organizational experience in Saskatchewan, to be his chief organizer. On that same date, Brandon's M.P. informed his local association that he would reconsider his earlier decision not "to run" as

> it has seemed to me my duty to do so. If, therefore, it is the unanimous desire of our friends in the country that I should be their candidate, I have made up my mind to accept the position.[72]

Thus, Sifton rather belatedly decided to seek re-election in his own constituency under circumstances that were undoubtedly less favourable than ever before.

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[69] Ibid., vol. 185, 148944, J.D. McGregor to Sifton, July 22, 1908

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 148948, Sifton to J.D. McGregor, August 22, 1908

[72] Ibid., vol. 184, 148144, Sifton to Dr. W.L. Harcourt, August 28, 1908

The fact that Sifton was no longer a resident of the Brandon constituency[73] might have been more significant had the Conservatives nominated a strong, local resident. However, although T. Mayne Daly had served as Brandon's first mayor and subsequently as the area's M.P. and cabinet minister, the fifty-six year old Conservative nominee was a Police Magistrate in Winnipeg in 1908.[74] Therefore, Brandon Alderman B.D. Wallace, who filed as an Independent Conservative after he had lost his party's nomination to the "import" Daly,[75] was the only local candidate to contest the 1908 election in the Brandon constituency. Wallace's nomination, of course, meant that the Conservative vote would be split and Sifton could be the only beneficiary of that division.[76] Consequently, the Sun gleefully reported a "Big Split in Tory Party."[77] Whether that "split" would prove to be crucial was yet to be determined.

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73. Sifton openly referred to the matter of his non-residency in his nomination address: in fact, he contended that he had offered to "step aside" for that very reason.

74. Daly, who had been born in Ontario in 1852, had emigrated to Manitoba in 1881. After having been elected mayor of Brandon in 1882 and in 1884, Daly had been elected to the House of Commons for Selkirk in 1887. Canadian Parliamentary Companion, 1891. After having served as Minister of Interior from 1891 to 1896, Daly practised law in British Columbia until his appointment as Police Magistrate in Winnipeg.

75. If Wallace had, as rumours suggested, been promised the federal nomination as a "consolation prize" at the time of Coldwell's appointment to the cabinet, he must have been embittered by the nomination of Daly, the third Conservative "parachute" candidate in as many elections.

76. However, there is no evidence to substantiate the intriguing allegations of the Winnipeg Daily Tribune, that the Sifton forces had actually engineered the Wallace candidacy. Wallace threatened to sue the Tribune unless the latter retracted the statement. Brandon Daily Sun, October 17, 1908

77. Ibid., September 24, 1908

In the meantime, the most predominant feature of this 1908 federal election in Manitoba was the open and active role of the Roblin government. The question of Manitoba's northern boundaries remained unresolved and provincial cabinet ministers, such as the Hon. George Coldwell and the Hon. J.H. Agnew who were the principal speakers at the Brandon federal constituency's annual meeting in 1908,[78] were eager to do battle with the Laurier government. That, as J.D. McGregor--a veteran Sifton supporter--knew, could be most significant:

> ...Rogers says they are going to give you a good chase then that means the Local Government will be in the fight. We can't afford to take any chances if this is the case but I will to [sic] boost the local man.[79]

Later, Edward Brown, the provincial Liberal leader, confirmed that the political influence of the Roblin government "supported by the peculiar influences that they are able to make use of is a hard force to over come...."[80] However, the open participation of the Roblin government would enable the Sifton forces to capitalize on whatever anti-Roblin sentiment existed in the constituency. Thus, the local electors would soon be, as they had been in the 1907 provincial election, reminded that the provincial Conservatives "had robbed Brandon of the provincial agricultural college"[81] and that they "know what the Daly-Rogers crowd stand for--for 'everything for Winnipeg'."[82] The support of the Roblin machine would be, therefore, somewhat of a "double-edged sword."

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[78] Ibid., May 2, 1908

[79] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 185, 148956, J.A. McGregor to Sifton, [no date]

[80] Ibid., vol. 182, 147078, E. Brown to Sifton, October 27, 1908

[81] Brandon Daily Sun, October 20, 1908

[82] Ibid., October 15, 1908

Although the Conservatives attempted to revive the old rumours regarding Sifton's "sudden new wealth" by praising Daly who "went to Ottawa a poor man and returned to Winnipeg a poorer man...,"[83] they concentrated primarily on areas of local dissatisfaction: i.e., the Manitoba boundary question and the decision of the G.T.P. to by-pass Brandon. Local Liberals, in response, promised that the G.T.P. would build a branch-line into the city within six months of the completion of the main line "if the Laurier government is returned to power."[84] In addition, they devoted much time and space to reminding the electors of the "phenomenal expansion of the last twelve years"[85] which they gleefully contrasted with the "hard years Canada experienced during the Conservatives' reign prior to 1896."[86] The latter argument, as Sifton conceded, may have been rather ineffective as there was a whole new generation of voters residing in this rapidly developing constituency by 1908 who would know little of those rather distant "hard years."[87] Those changes in population could be politically significant.

Despite the apparent prosperity of "the past twelve years," Manitoba Liberals suffered a tremendous setback in 1908 as they lost five of their seven constituencies.[88] The Canadian Annual Review later attributed this debacle primarily to Sifton's 1905 resignation

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83. Ibid., September 24, 1908

84. Ibid., October 15, 1908

85. Ibid., September 17, 1908

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., September 23, 1908

88. The national results were less damaging as the Liberals fell from 138 to 135 seats. Due to an increase in the number of constituencies, the Conservatives' total was increased from seventy-five to eighty-five. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 106, 119

which had left the Liberals' leaderless and disorganized in Manitoba.[89] One suspects that Sifton himself, who did manage to retain one of the two remaining Liberal constituencies by a narrow margin of 3,565 to Daly's 3,496, undoubtedly suffered politically from the indecision and lack of organization that preceded the 1908 election. Had Daly received the 101 votes polled by Wallace, the Independent Conservative, the once all-powerful Sifton would have been defeated by a narrow margin. Thus, the division within the local Conservative ranks may well have been the determining factor in this federal election contest.[90] Nevertheless, Brandon area voters--perhaps by chance to some degree--had again elected a member to the government side of the House.

While Sifton, even after his 1908 re-election, continued to play a diminishing role in Manitoba politics, he did continue to support the party financially and in an advisory capacity. For example, Sifton personally contributed $5,000 towards the costs of the provincial organizer whom the provincial Liberals hired as of January 1, 1909.[91] An interesting example of the nature of the advice which Sifton frequently proferred was with respect to the Conservative "offer" that H.A. Robson, a prominent Liberal, be appointed as a Judge of the Court of King's Bench on the condition that the Liberals drop their election

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89. Canadian Annual Review, 1911 (Toronto 1912), 241

90. While labour was then emerging as a more recognizable voice in municipal affairs, there is no evidence to indicate whether labour in general or the rather prolonged C.P.R. strike of the summer of 1908 was politically significant in this constituency. While the Liberals later contended that the Conservatives had helped the C.P.R. break this 1908 strike, there was no evidence of such concern at the time of the 1908 federal election. Brandon Daily Sun, July 8, 1910

91. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 194, 154761, Frank O. Fowler to Sifton, September 30, 1910

protests in the provincial constituencies of Gilbert Plains and Virden.[92] Unlike some provincial Liberals, Sifton was opposed to this "deal": "...making a bargain in relation to Election Petitions as part of an arrangement for the appointment of a Judge strikes me as being peculiarly offensive and objectionable."[93] Were there some self-inflicted moral standards in Manitoba politics, even in the Sifton era?

Premier Roblin's decision to call a "snap" election in July 1910 was obviously not a moral question: it was, instead, a matter of political judgement. The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association had grown rapidly in numerical strength since its inception and the movement's potential political strength could not be ignored.[94] Thus, the Roblin government responded quickly--first, by announcing the implementation of a government owned elevator system and, secondly, by the calling of a provincial election, two years before the "due" date. This strategic decision may also have been influenced by the fact that the Liberals had just secured a new, and as yet unestablished, leader in T.C. Norris. While J.W. Dafoe privately contended that "the organization as a whole is in pretty good shape,"[95] the contentious boundary question remained unresolved and Perry, the recently appointed provincial Liberal organizer, suddenly resigned early in 1910 due to the alleged lack of co-operation of his fellow Liberals. The Roblin government, it would appear, was "striking while the iron was hot."

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[92] These protests were part of the aftermath of the 1907 provincial election. Ibid., vol. 188, 151195, Dafoe to Sifton, September 30, 1909

[93] Ibid., 151197, Dafoe to Sifton, October 4, 1909

[94] The Roblin government had lost the Birtle by-election in late 1909 to a Liberal candidate, who was also publically identified as a representative of the Grain Growers' Association. The issue was apparently that of the need for a government owned elevator system. Morton, Manitoba A History, 299-300

[95] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 193, 154657, Dafoe to Sifton, April 11, 1910

The fact that the provincial Liberals appeared to be in a disadvantageous position on the eve of the 1910 provincial election may have influenced the decision of Brandon Liberals to select a relative newcomer, S.H. McKay,[96] to oppose the veteran politician, the Hon. George Coldwell. In any event, as late as mid June 1910, Edward Brown (the former provincial leader) had believed that J.H. Ingram, the president of the Young Men's Liberal Association, was the most likely choice.[97] Due to the fact that Brandon Liberals remained badly divided[98] and in view of the obvious political strength of Coldwell, the Minister of Education, the selection of a relatively new compromise candidate may have been politically desirable. In politics, the "best" man is not necessarily the "most qualified" man!

Coldwell's extensive political career--both municipally and provincially--was somewhat of a "mixed blessing" as it provided his Liberal opponents with a "target" at which to aim. For example, Coldwell was blamed for an earlier council decision to provide water to the C.P.R. at an unusually low price;[99] for the "over-staffing of the waterworks" department;[100] and for the Roblin government's failure to legislate compulsory school attendance.[101] Finally, Coldwell could be held accountable for any of the Roblin government's "misdoings": thus, S.H. McKay's revival of the "Eli Sand Company scandal"[102] and his charges of "strike-breaking"[103] could conceivably damage any Conservative candidate, Coldwell included.[104]

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[96] S.H. McKay had been mayor of Walkerton, Ontario, for a number of years. Ibid., July 4, 1910

[97] PAC, W. Laurier Papers, vol. 634, 172091, Edward Brown to Laurier, June 14, 1910

[98] Edward Brown, on the eve of the 1910 election, described the Brandon constituency as "one of the most difficult that we have to deal with in provincial politics, as our own party is split up into a number of factions." Ibid., 172091, E. Brown to Laurier, June 14, 1910

While it is impossible to determine the significance of "labour" in the 1910 provincial election, the Liberals were certainly aware of the potential of this newly emerging political force. Ironically, the principal figure in the "labour" issue of that moment was one Ed Fulcher, a local Trades and Labor Council member whom Sifton had appointed local correspondent for the Labour Gazette on the eve of the 1908 federal election.[105] Fulcher subsequently had been "maimed for life on Government [i.e., federal] work at the Armory"[106] and the one thousand dollars compensation which he had received from the contracting company was locally regarded as inadequate and injust.

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[99] This decision presumably necessitated the construction of an otherwise unnecessarily large (and expensive) filtration plant.

[100] The Sun described Coldwell as "the most expensive alderman the city ever had." Brandon Daily Sun, July 6, 1910

[101] Coldwell, who denied that he had previously favoured such a policy, contended that he favoured "better schools, better plant and equipment, and the children would come to the schools all the time." Winnipeg Daily Tribune, July 6, 1910. Fortunately, for Coldwell and for the Conservatives who feared alienating the Roman Catholic Church and the ethnic communities, compulsory attendance was not yet the popular issue among the WASP of Manitoba that it would become by 1914-15.

[102] The Canadian Northern Railway had built a spur line in 1908 for the sole benefit of the Eli Sand Company and Premier Roblin, who owned shares in that company, was a principal beneficiary of this decision. Brandon Daily Sun, June 9, 1910. The Free Press rather wistfully described this issue as "The Paramount Issue of the Campaign." Manitoba Free Press, July 2, 1910

[103] The Conservatives, McKay charged, had helped the C.P.R. break its 1908 strike for which the party received $150,000 in return. Ibid., July 8, 1910

[104] "Old scandals", however, are not particularly politically effective.

> This incident will simply close the ranks of labor party here to anything that looks like a Liberal in complexion.... It will mean at least 100 votes in this city to us and our election is likely to be in July. If this affair is not corrected at once, a Liberal candidate might just as well stay at home and save his time.[107]

While the results of this dispute cannot be determined, its principal significance is that a prominent local politician had identified a sizable "labour vote" which, he feared, could "swing" away from the provincial Liberals due to the federal government's failure to satisfy a local grievance. Such are the complexities of local politics!

Despite Liberal attempts to capitalize upon the "desertion" of the traditionally pro-Conservative Brandon Times[108] and the fact that Coldwell's first public meeting had to be cancelled due to a small attendance,[109] the Conservatives encountered little difficulty in winning the Brandon constituency. In fact, Coldwell's victory over McKay by a vote of 1,402 to 1,150 was the largest majority recorded to that date. While the Liberals--as the losers traditionally did--complained that there had been considerable "vote-buying,"[110] the fact that McKay had reportedly been left to make the fight single-handed[111] was probably more significant. The re-election of the Roblin government was anticipated,[112] and Brandon Liberals, it would appear, essentially "wrote off" this constituency. Certainly Brandon voters who were traditionally, to this point, voting "ministerialist" would have had little difficulty in determining their choice in 1910.

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[105] The local Trades and Labor Council had complained that the local correspondent, one Stringer, was unable, due to physical incapacities, to get out into the community to secure the news. Sifton arranged that Stringer should resign and Ed Fulcher, the Trades and Labor Council nominee, was appointed in his stead on the eve of the 1908 federal election.

[106] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 194, 154741-42, J.W. Fleming to Sifton, May 21, 1910

[107] Ibid.

[108] The combination of the fact that the local Tories and the Times had had a bitter dispute over election expenses in 1908 and that Alderman B.W. Wallace, Coldwell's personal foe, was a director of the Times probably led to the decision. The Winnipeg Daily Tribune, July 9, 1910

Ironically, the 1910 municipal election was a more closely contested event than the local provincial election contest and it was certainly a marked contrast to 1909 when Mayor Adolph and council had been re-elected by acclamation. Whether the unprecedented three-way mayoralty contest was a direct result of the combined "Gas Company--

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109. The Conservatives maintained that the "small" crowd of 150 was the result of a severe rainstorm which occurred just prior to the meeting. The Liberals predictably disputed this explanation. Manitoba Free Press, July 1, 1910

110. "Mysterious strangers" were reported coming and going from the Conservative committee rooms and the presence of Bank of Ottawa bills, which were very uncommon in Brandon, was cited as evidence of Conservative vote buying. Ibid., July 7, 1910

111. Ibid., July 12, 1910. Sifton offered neither advice nor assistance to provincial Liberals, McKay included, in the 1910 provincial election. The absence of such expert assistance had to be politically significant.

112. Donnelly suggests that, in 1910, "a victory for the Conservatives seemed, from the first, a foregone conclusion...." Donnelly, Dafoe of the Free Press, 61. In fact, the Conservatives were returned with the same majority as they had previous to the election.

street railway" issue[113] cannot be determined. Certainly, the three candidates—J.W. Fleming, an ex-mayor and the defeated Liberal candidate of 1907; B.D. Wallace, the unsuccessful Independent Conservative nominee of 1908; and R.D. Evans, the always controversial east end "Red Tory"[114]—launched a strenuous campaign. Personal canvassing and an unusually intensive "get out the vote" campaign[115] may have contributed to the excitement which eventually necessitated the calling of the police on election day in ward four where there was reportedly a "large foreign vote."[116] In the end, ex-Mayor Fleming won a narrow victory over Wallace while R.D. Evans trailed badly.[117] Thus, Fleming, who had not been able to win election to the provincial legislature as a Liberal in 1907,

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113. The issue began when the Brandon Gas and Power Company sought several presumably innocuous amendments to their 1907 agreement with the city. Although local public opinion only slowly concluded that the desired amendments were detrimental to the city's interests (i.e., the provision for a guaranteed minimum wage was "inadvertently" omitted), the end result was a general re-examination of the major question of municipal concessions to private firms. Consequently, when a Vancouver firm proposed to build a street railway system in Brandon, a delegation of several hundred demanded of council that a plebiscite on a proposal for a municipally owned system be held. Brandon Daily Sun, November 24, 1910

114. The modern term "Red Tory" seems applicable for this Conservative alderman who regarded himself as the self-appointed voice of the working class.

115. Wallace apparently hired all the available sleighs and carriages so Fleming secured a number of automobiles that had been "put up" for the winter. Brandon Daily Sun, December 22, 1910. The determination of the Fleming supporters was evident in the instance of one lady who had successfully resisted five separate attempts by Fleming workers to get her to the polls. Alderman Coleman finally succeeded on the sixth visit after he announced that he would not leave without the lady in question! Ibid.

116. Ibid.

117. Fleming received 872 votes while the undoubtedly frustrated Wallace polled 782. R.D. Evans received only 103 votes which suggests rather strongly that the controversial ex-Alderman was not regarded as the "working man's" candidate that he claimed to be. Ibid.

began what proved to be an extensive second "era" as mayor.[118] Presumably the criteria applied by Brandon electors in mayoralty contests varied considerably from those employed at provincial election time! Perhaps J.W. Fleming had found his true "level" in Brandon politics.

Periodically in history certain years emerge as landmarks and 1911 was such a year. While Clifford Sifton had reportedly informed his local association in 1908 that he would not stand again in Brandon,[119] no one could have expected this "Sifton era" to conclude in the dramatic manner in which it did. The revival of interest in reciprocity had surfaced innocently in 1910 as Prime Minister Laurier had begun his western tour: in fact, one of the most significant meetings had occurred in Brandon where some two hundred members of the Manitoba Grain Growers had petitioned the Prime Minister to seek an extensive reciprocal trade agreement with the United States.[120] According to all reports, Brandon Liberals were enthusiastically in favour of this traditional Liberal proposal. Sifton's decision, therefore, to oppose this agreement and, subsequently, to join the Conservatives in a determined campaign to defeat his former colleagues must have been a traumatic shock for his local supporters.

Shocked or not, local Liberal leaders immediately re-affirmed their support of the Laurier government and its proposal. Thus, the Brandon Liberal Association unanimously resolved:

> That we the Liberals of Brandon desire to express our confidence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and that we heartily

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[118] Fleming had served as mayor in 1904 and 1905. After his victory in 1910, he would subsequently secure re-election in 1911 and 1912.

[119] Brandon Daily Sun, August 2, 1911

[120] Ibid., July 18, 1910

> endorse the reciprocity agreement and assure him the views expressed by our representative the Hon. Clifford Sifton do not represent the sentiments of his constituents.[121]

J.H. Ingram, a prominent Brandon Liberal who believed that the majority of the constituency and "particularly the agricultural class, are in favour of the Taft-Fielding arrangements,"[122] even expressed his disappointment that Sifton had chosen

> to put into the hands of the opposition in Parliament, a speech which will be used as weapons against the policy of the Liberal party for a number of years to come. The Conservative party are not entitled to any such assistance from you.[123]

This unprecedented "split" between Brandon's most prominent Liberal and the local association was extremely politically significant. First of all, Brandon Liberals had to nominate a new candidate from among the three men who sought that opportunity. The local Grain Growers, who supported the reciprocity proposal despite their disappointment that agricultural machinery was not included on the free list[124] and who had hoped in vain that Brandon Liberals would simply endorse a "farmer" candidate in 1911,[125] were represented by J.W. Scallion of Virden. The "traditional" Liberals were represented both by A.E. Hill, a fifty-two year old Griswold merchant, and Brandon's Mayor Fleming, who had stood provincially in 1907. Scallion, the Grain Growers' candidate, led on the first ballot (even though he was not present) with ninety-five votes; A.E. Hill was a close second with eighty-five votes while Mayor Fleming was a very distant third with fourteen votes. However, the "Liberal vote" coalesced on the second ballot and consequently A.E. Hill was elected by the narrow margin of 100 to 94.[126] Had Scallion received a scant five more votes on that first ballot, the farmers would have succeeded in "capturing" the local Liberal organization in 1911, a full decade before the "birth" of the Progressives in 1921.

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[121] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 196, 156299, R. Forke and S.A. Coxe to Sifton, March 9, 1911. Robert Forke was an active member of the Grain Growers and he would become, in 1921, the Progressive M.P. for Brandon.

[122] Ibid., vol. 197, 156953, J.H. Ingram to Sifton, March 8, 1911

[123] Ibid.

[124] Brandon Daily Sun, January 27, 1911

[125] Ibid., July 28, 1911

For the fourth federal election in succession, Brandon area Conservatives selected a non-resident to be their candidate. J.A.M. Aikins was also well-known as a C.P.R. solicitor.[127] This was, in the critical eyes of the Brandon Daily Sun, an "ideal" combination!

> If the electors of the division saw fit to reject such splendid men as Hugh John Macdonald and T. Mayne Daly because they were outsiders, there is little reason to expect that the constituency of Brandon will decide to choose as its representative J.A.M. Aikens [sic] C.P.R. solicitor of Winnipeg....[128]

In fact, the Sun proceeded to remind its readers of the part that Aikins had played as C.P.R. counsel in the settlement which followed a tragic accident--twelve years before! The "injured" families had subsequently sued the C.P.R. for $50,000, a sum which the Sun contended would have been paid--had it not been for Aikins. The Sun was still editorially outraged!

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126. Ibid., August 12, 1911

127. J.A.M. Aikins, who had been born in Peel County, Ontario in 1851, was educated at Upper Canada College and the University of Toronto. Aikins, whose father served as Secretary of State (1869-72) and Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba (1882-88), moved to Winnipeg in 1879 and he soon became one of Manitoba's most renowned lawyers. PAM, Manitoba Biography, file B8, 156

128. Brandon Daily Sun, August 16, 1911

> Is there a wife or mother here who feels that $2,250 would recompense her for the life of a husband and a father and two sons?[129]

There was, of course, a political message.

> Men of Brandon! When you mark the ballot... remember the Widow Ramsden and the Widow Webster and the part that was played against them by J.A.M. Aikins, of Winnipeg.[130]

Nevertheless, the predominant issue in 1911 was reciprocity and Clifford Sifton's well publicized stand on that proposal. While the Brandon area voters would traditionally applaud any proposed reduction in tariffs,[131] the Conservatives did present counter-arguments. As Robert Rogers, who was now a federal Conservative candidate,[132] explained:

> ...they were going to fight reciprocity because they believed...that to do so was to save those economic conditions which had enabled the people of Canada to prosper as no other people had ever prospered before. Sir John Macdonald would not be in favour of reciprocity that would destroy the nationality of Canada.[133]

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[129] *Ibid.*, September 19, 1911

[130] *Ibid.*

[131] The one group of Brandon area voters that could be threatened by reciprocity were the railway employees whose livelihood was dependent upon the existing east-west trade patterns. Fleming attempted to allay their fears by suggesting that "with the Hudson's Bay railway the pact would result in drawing the wheat from the United States through Canada on the way to the old country." *Ibid.*, September 13, 1911. One wonders whether that argument was convincing.

[132] The fact that Robert Rogers had entered federal politics in 1911 may have been of particular significance for provincial politics in Manitoba thereafter. At least R.P. Roblin, who described Rogers as the "safest and most astute adviser in political matters in Canada," suggested, in 1911, that "in securing him you have weakened the Government of which I am the head to an extent that its defeat may be compassed at next election." PAC, R. Borden Papers, vol. 252, 142131-1A, R.P. Roblin to Bennett, [no date]

[133] *Brandon Daily Sun*, September 5, 1911

Robert Borden also told Brandon area farmers that they would gain less from reciprocity than they anticipated[134] and his own staff, at least, were satisfied with the results:

> So many people wanted to get into the hall we had to change it to an outdoor meeting. The farmers here are quite ready to hear the other side of the reciprocity question and when it is explained to them it does not seem hard to make them adopt our view of it.[135]

However, the arguments presented by Rogers and Borden may have been less significant than the attitude of Brandon's former Member, Clifford Sifton. Although 844 more voters would go to the polls in 1911 than had done so in 1908 and, consequently, the significant increase of 940 Tory votes could conceivably be explained largely in those terms,[136] there is considerable evidence to indicate that much of the new Conservative strength was the result of a major shift in the Liberal vote, a "switch" caused by Sifton's publicized position. For example, one local Liberal

> ...when approached said candidly that there must be something back of all this and that you [Sifton] had studied it and he therefore proposed to vote with you. He is fair type of several hundred....[137]

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134. The Sun, naturally, was not convinced by this argument. Ibid., June 21, 1911

135. PAC, R. Borden Papers, vol. 131, 69474-75, Geo. Perley to J.S. Carstairs, June 21, 1911

136. In 1908, Sifton had received 3,565 votes; T.M. Daly had polled 3,496 votes; and Wallace had received 101 votes--for a total of 7,162 votes. In 1911, the Liberal Hill received 3,570 votes while the Conservative vote rose dramatically to 4,436 for a total of 8,006. Thus 844 more votes were cast in 1911 while the Conservative vote was increased by 940. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1912. Actually, if one considers Wallace's 101 votes to be "Conservative votes," the Tories' increased strength in 1911 was only 839 votes.

137. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 196, 156258, Joseph B. Chambers to Sifton, September 22, 1911

According to Sifton's informant,

> ...your influence was the chief contributing cause of Mr. Aikins' [sic] large majority here yesterday. There is no other possible explanation, and indeed, the Conservative canvassers found their task easy.... Hundreds of Liberals who could not themselves foresee all the possible consequences of new trading conditions were content to accept your leadership.[138]

George Coleman, a city alderman and a long time Conservative party worker, also explained Aikin's resounding victory over A.E. Hill by a vote of 4,436 to 3,570 in terms of Sifton's position.

> Your splendid stand on this matter had been one of the main factors in the defeat of the pact, and this is very strongly realized all through this part of the country...for my own part, whether on the platform or in canvassing, your opinion was one of my strongest arguments because it was the opinion of one who was not running as a candidate himself in the Election and had had the courage to break with his Party on this great question.[139]

Sifton himself concluded that "a good many of my friends adopted my view and supported the Conservative candidate."[140] Thus it would appear that Clifford Sifton remained as a significant--and perhaps the determining--influence in Brandon politics in 1911 even though he had "officially" retired from office by that time. On the other hand, it should also be noted that Brandon area electors were "in step" with Manitoba and with the nation in 1911:[141] the constituency would continue to be represented on the "ministerialist" side of the House of Commons--

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[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., 156283, G.B. Coleman to Sifton, September 23, 1911

[140] Ibid., 156285, Sifton to G.B. Coleman, September 26, 1911

[141] The Conservatives won eight of the ten Manitoba constituencies in 1911. Nationally, they won 134 (as contrasted with 85 in 1908) seats to the Liberals' 87 (as contrasted with 135 in 1908). Beck, Pendulum of Power, 119, 135

just as it had been provincially and federally throughout most of its political history.

Despite the "ministerialist" vote and the role played, albeit in absentia, by Clifford Sifton in 1911, the "Sifton era" was drawing to a close. It had been an era of continuing economic growth as the city's population had expanded from 5,620 in 1901 to 13,839 in 1911. The "Wheat City"--the one-time community of merchants and retired farmers--had developed into a market-railway centre with a growing and aggressive trade union membership,[142] complete with "budding" political ambitions.[143] While municipal politics remained essentially as the "politics of the individual,"[144] special interest and citizen groups were displaying periodic interest. For example, the Moral and Social Reform League, which had been initially concerned with the need to close all of the city's "bars," re-appeared in 1911[145] to share the public limelight momentarily with the increasingly active Trades and Labor Council. As a result, the "developmental policies" of the Sifton era were now questioned--admittedly only to a degree--as in the case of the Trades and Labor Council's proposal for the municipal ownership of the proposed street railway system.[146] However, a three to one majority of those citizens who voted in 1911 were opposed to the principle of a municipally owned street railway system.[147] There had, therefore, been no fundamental change in the public's conception of the nature and role of government by 1911.

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[142] Eighty men attended a meeting of the Bricklayers Union in 1911 whereas it was stated that only twenty members would have been present at a meeting of the same union one year previously. Brandon Daily Sun, October 7, 1911

[143] For example, a trade union leader in 1911 described unionism as "a growing force...to be reckoned with as much in municipal affairs as in those directly appertaining to their own calling." Ibid., October 7, 1911. However, although the Trades and Labor Council did give consideration to fielding their own candidates in the 1911 municipal election, nothing concrete developed. One of "labour's" difficulties was the fact that the property qualifications reportedly "prevented many capable men from seeking aldermanic positions." Ibid., November 17, 1911

[144] While the Sun estimated that seven of the eleven members of municipal government were Liberals, the newspaper assured its readers: "Politics..never entered into the discussions while the municipal battle was on...." Ibid., January 3, 1911

[145] The League was re-activated in 1911 under the leadership of Dr. A.P. McDiarmid, the president of Brandon College, and S.E. Clement, an ex-mayor who would, in 1915, be elected as the Liberal M.L.A. for Brandon. Ibid., January 13, 1911

The nature of politics, however, had changed significantly during this 1899-1911 era as newspaper advertising, personal canvassing and "get out the vote" campaigns were adopted at all three levels of political activity. In fact, the only real difference in the nature of politics at the three levels was the absence of party politics at the municipal level where there was less evidence of even "disguised" partisan activity than in the early years of the Sifton era. In addition, Sifton himself played a markedly different role as the era progressed. Thus, the man who had played a significant role--both openly and as a confidant--in provincial politics in his early "ministerial" years had increasingly divorced himself from such participation from 1903 onward and even his advisory role was noticeably lessened after his resignation in 1905. It is interesting to note in passing that the local Conservative majorities increased in direct proportion to his gradual withdrawal. Nevertheless, Sifton, despite his diminishing role after 1905, continued to dominate federal politics in Brandon--even in the 1911 election. Thus, politics in Brandon from 1905 to 1911 was still predominantly "the politics of Clifford Sifton, M.P." just as it had been during the era of Clifford Sifton, Minister of Interior.

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[146] The Trades and Labor Council invited the mayor of Calgary to visit Brandon and to explain how his city's municipally owned street railway system had been successfully established. Ibid., October 6, 1911

[147] Only 30% of the eligible voters cast ballots on this issue and in the rather uneventful 1911 municipal election which saw Mayor J.W. Fleming and two aldermen re-elected by acclamation. A minor feature of this election was the fact that the recent establishment of an aldermanic residential requirement meant that two aldermen were forced to seek re-election in different wards. Ibid., November 16, 1911

Chapter IV

Brandon's Political Response to the "War Years": 1912-18

The "Clifford Sifton era" had been a period of almost constant growth for Brandon: that pattern was to change during the "War Years" which followed immediately thereafter. For example, the city's population, which had been growing steadily since the beginning of the Laurier-Sifton era, totalled 17,177 in 1914. Due to the cessation of the immigration movement and the departure of many young men for the European theatre, the city's population declined throughout the duration of the War. In 1918, as the War was concluding, the number of Brandon residents had fallen to 14,012, comparable to 1911 when Brandon's population was listed at 13,839.[1] In addition, the prosperous economic conditions associated with the Laurier administration peaked in 1913, the year in which the city inaugurated its municipally owned street railway system and, as a result, "for the first time took on a metropolitan appearance...."[2] However, the first signs of a downturn in the economy were already evident as the city was forced to "cut" the salaries of some 300 labourers[3] during that same summer. By October 1914, unemployment was a cause for considerable concern and the C.P.R., in an effort to stimulate the local economy, hired all the available married men at $1.50 per day to undertake some "blasting" even though the work was not yet required.[4] The Roblin government also tried to create jobs in early 1915 by authorizing some sewer construction at the provincial mental asylum ahead of schedule.[5] However, the War itself undoubtedly stimulated the economic recovery which produced a potential labour shortage for the summer of 1916.[6] However, this local economic recovery was probably due more to a declining labour supply than it was due to the creation of new jobs. That temporary labour shortage would obviously end with the return of the demobilized troops at the end of the war. In fact, labour unrest was very noticeable in Brandon even by 1918 as a demand for higher wages led to several strikes. The "War Years" were unsettled years—at least in economic terms--in this city.

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[1] Brandon Daily Sun, September 19, 1921

[2] Ibid., June 3, 1913

[3] Ibid., July 8, 1913

[4] Ibid., October 10, 1914

Those "unsettled" economic conditions might well be politically significant and "politics" in Brandon did seem to undergo severe changes as neither of Brandon's representatives remained in office at the conclusion of the War and even Mayor Cater, who had served for an unprecedented four years, was defeated in late 1918, just as the era drew to a close. Admittedly, the resignation of the Hon. George Coldwell, Brandon's M.P.P. since 1907, and the subsequent defeat of J.A.M. Aikins, Brandon's former Member of Parliament and the new leader of the Independent Conservative party, were not, in any way, related to the events of the first World War. Although Coldwell and Aikins were not political "casualties" of the War, Harry Cater may have been. Having won the election as mayor in late 1914, he was re-elected in 1915, 1916 and 1917 (twice by acclamation). However, in 1918, he was defeated by A.R. McDiarmid, president of the local

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[5] Ibid., January 9, 1915

[6] Ibid., March 29, 1916

Board of Trade. Had the War unleashed certain "forces"--economic and/or political--with which even Brandon's most successful municipal politician could not contend?

The future looked exceedingly bright at the beginning of this new era. The previous year--1911--had been, in the words of Mayor Fleming, the "greatest year in Brandon's history."[7] The new Canadian Northern station and hotel, the almost completed Canadian Pacific station, the new hospital for the mentally insane (valued at $500,000), the fire station, the McKenzie block and the Clement block had all been commenced or completed. When council, early in 1912, awarded the franchise for the street railway system to J.D. McGregor, a prominent city resident and later the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, eastern financial interests speculating on the city's anticipated growth pushed the price of adjoining farmland to four hundred dollars an acre[8] and, by year's end, an estimated total of "one million seven hundred thousand dollars worth of Brandon property changed hands...."[9] It proved to be the most dramatic land boom in Brandon's history.

This "boom" and the optimism that surrounded it obviously was of some political consequence. For example, Brandon electors who had rejected a proposal for the municipal ownership of the proposed street railway system by a three to one margin in 1911 reversed that decision in June 1912 by the overwhelming vote of 716 to 44 (after J.D.

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7. Ibid., January 16, 1912

8. Ibid., May 6, 1912

9. Brandon Weekly Sun, February 13, 1913

McGregor had withdrawn from the project).[10] The buoyant mood of 1912 had apparently convinced many former "doubters" that the new facility would be profitable. Under those circumstances, the principle of public ownership was quite acceptable! Unfortunately, those anticipated profits were never to materialize.

While this decision to establish a municipally owned street railway system proved to be of greater long term significance, the 1912 "police scandal" received more public attention at the time. The police, who had been called to investigate a disturbance at the home of Police Chief Boyd, had refused to enter the home in which the Chief's son, Harry, and a girl of "dubious moral character" were present. When the Moral and Social Reform League met later to investigate this incident, a much more extensive (and sordid) story of police bribery and immorality unfolded."[11] Although Police Chief Boyd subsequently resigned, a "Citizens' League," consisting of several ex-mayors and ex-aldermen who apparently personified a conservative reaction to the fact that Brandon by 1912 had allegedly become "the toughest little city from coast to coast,"[12] was organized. However, this civic reform movement—which bears marked similarities to the American Progressive movement of the same era—proved to be of limited significance. The Citizens' League did not field their own candidates for the 1912 municipal election as they had contemplated: furthermore, the incumbent mayor (Fleming), whom many held accountable for the city's unsavoury condition, was easily re-elected, despite the scandal of the summer, the formation of the Citizens' League, and the opposition of the *Sun*.[13] The reform movement, in 1912, could force the resignation of a local police chief, but it could not really seriously affect the local political process.[14] Could it be that "scandal" was not particularly politically significant as long as the economy remained buoyant and jobs were plentiful?

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[10] Brandon voters authorized the sale of $300,000 worth of city debentures in mid 1912 by the overwhelming majority of 716 to 44 with approximately 75% of the electorate voting. Brandon Daily Sun, June 14, 1912

[11] For example, it was alleged that the Police Chief "had kept a prostitute in the [his] office all night and sent her away on the next morning's train." Ibid., September 5, 1912

[12] Ibid., August 20, 1912

Those new, less buoyant, economic conditions were apparent in 1913. The newly inaugurated municipally owned street railway system was already losing money at a projected rate of $1000 per car per year.[15] Those losses and the increase in property taxation which was necessary to fund this venture suddenly became the predominant issue in civic politics. In fact, it was alleged, at a protest meeting late in 1913, that Brandon was the most heavily taxed municipality in Western Canada.[16] In addition, some 300 city employed labourers had also been hurt by a reduction in salary in

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13. Fleming defeated Hughes by a vote of 1228 to 689. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1912

14. Admittedly, the local Commercial Travellers Association, who were disturbed by the predominance of allegedly "self-serving" real estate men on council, did elect their own candidate, William Bourke, in ward five where there was a reportedly heavy "traveller" vote. *Ibid.*, November 21, 1912

15. *Brandon Weekly Sun*, December 11, 1913

16. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1913

1913.[17] As a result, at least one spokesman (ex-Alderman Doran) proclaimed the need for an entirely new council as one solution to the city's economic problems.[18] The electors, however, in 1913 were primarily concerned with the increase in property taxation and the need for civic economy. Consequently, "pro-labour" candidates such as S.C. Doran and Harry Cater did not fare well in this particular contest.[19]

Harry William Cater, born in Norfolk, England in 1869, had emigrated to Brandon in 1889 where he soon established a small manufacturing firm, the Brandon Pump and Windmill Works. Cater, who easily qualified as a long-time city resident but never as a member of the local "establishment," had been elected to council in

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[17] Brandon Daily Sun, July 8, 1913. Although the beginnings of the 1913 recession clearly hurt "labour" to some degree, their organized response was rather limited. In fact, their primary interest in 1913 pertained to the issues related to the observance of the Sabbath--i.e., that the street cars should operate and that funerals should be permitted. However, they did encourage William Martlett to stand as an aldermanic candidate, albeit somewhat reluctantly as the trade unionist Martlett had recently become an independent businessman! Brandon Weekly Sun, November 20, 1913. Although Martlett did campaign briefly, he was never nominated officially. The Trades and Labor Council also discussed the interesting possibility of nominating a woman for the school board election. The idea was probably too much of a novelty in 1913 for it to be taken seriously. In addition, the fact that only a small percentage of women property holders would be entitled to vote was obviously a deterrent. It is interesting to note, however, that 70 ladies had voted by 4 p.m. on election day in ward five and the total vote in the poll would be 802. Female voters were a sizable minority, at least, in 1913. Ibid., December 11, 1913

[18] Ibid., November 27, 1913. While Martlett did not stand, ex-Alderman S.C. Doran, a railway employee and a self-styled "labour" spokesman, did run in the working class ward one. Doran protested, however, that he represented "no particular class." Ibid., December 11, 1913

[19] George Coleman, a Conservative lawyer and a veteran ward one alderman, defeated Doran by a vote of 424 to 231. Ibid.

1909. As Cater employed only two to three men, his status as a local businessman did not prevent him from adopting the role of a "labourite" in local politics.[20] The major issue, however, in 1913 was the sharply increased rate of property taxation. Cater, who had opposed reduced salary scales for the 300 civic labourers, part of Brandon's economy measures for 1913, was not yet the "civic economy and reduced taxation" candidate that he would later become. As a result, the property vote, represented in the city's central wards, gave the majority to Hughes, whom they had rejected as a "reform" candidate the year before.[21] Thus, prevailing economic conditions were seemingly the primary factor in municipal politics in Brandon in 1913. Whether that was equally true of politics at the provincial level in that era would, perhaps, be determined by the results of the 1914 provincial election.

Although financial problems continued to plague Brandon's civic leaders throughout the first half of 1914,[22] the July 1914 provincial election in Brandon was fought primarily on other issues.

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[20] Had Cater employed a large number of workers, he surely would have encountered difficulties in being accepted as a self-appointed "labour" spokesman.

[21] Cater won ward one by a vote of 316 to 268 and he, also, was successful in ward five by a smaller margin of 363 to 345. Hughes won wards two, three and four by a combined total of 630 to 399. The total vote was 1243 to 1078 for Hughes. Brandon Weekly Sun, December 24, 1913

[22] Consequently, street car crews were reduced from two men to one (Brandon Daily Sun, February 10, 1914) and council, subsequently, decided to hire an American expert on urban affairs, one J.H. Clewes, to conduct a civic survey and to advise council on how Brandon might be more efficiently administered. Ibid., June 23, 1914. In addition, the outbreak of war in August 1914 provided additional financial obligations for the city as the families of volunteers would have to be assisted, if need be. Four such families were being supported by the city by the end of August. Ibid., August 29, 1914

In fact, the election in Brandon would be a hard fought contest between the Hon. George Coldwell, "Brandon's" cabinet minister since his initial election in 1907, and S.E. Clement, his Liberal opponent and a member of one of the city's most distinguished families. Coldwell, the "ministerialist" candidate, was standing essentially on the Roblin government's record: Clement, on the other hand, personified those several reform movements (i.e., "ban the bar," compulsory education, women's suffrage and direct legislation) which had united with the Liberal party in 1914 against their common foe.

The forty-six year old Stephen E. Clement appeared to be an ideal candidate--at least "on paper." Clement's father--Stephen Clement--had been elected the first M.P.P. for Shoal Lake and Russell in 1881. Immediately after that election, Clement had been appointed the first sheriff of the Western Judicial District, an appointment that brought him and his family to the newly established Brandon in 1882. Clement Sr. was a very prominent member of this new community until his death in 1901.[23] His son, Stephen E. Clement, "studied" law initially under Clifford Sifton and, subsequently, under J.A.M. Aikins. Having been "called to the bar" in 1895, S.E. Clement returned to Brandon to practise law with his brother Robert in a firm that still exists, albeit in amended form, today. As a young lawyer, S.E. Clement was active in community affairs: he was a prominent member of First Methodist Church; he was a strong supporter of the temperance movement; he (like his father) served on the somewhat prestigious Brandon General Hospital Board; and he served at all levels of municipal politics.

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[23] Winnipeg Tribune, June 24, 1930 as contained in PAM, Manitoba Biographies, B10, 230

In fact, young Clement methodically climbed the political ladder in what some political observers would regard as the ideal fashion. First, he stood for election to the school board, where he served six years. Then, he successfully sought aldermanic office. Having served a two year term, S.E. Clement was elected mayor of Brandon in 1907 and re-elected in 1908.[24] Surely those were excellent qualifications for a would-be M.L.A. in 1914.

Brandon Conservatives, for their part had a basic two-part strategy in 1914: first, to stress their record as a government, particularly in respect to what they had done for Brandon; and, secondly, to belittle the various reform proposals in any way possible, in the hope that the entire Liberal-reform alliance would be discredited as a result. For example, the Minister of Education, at a Trades and Labor Council meeting, lauded such government measures as the Workmen's Compensation Act, a Scaffolding Act, and the Fair Wages Act (all of which were reputedly designed to further the interests of the working class). The Roblin government, or so Coldwell claimed, had spent some $1,605,000 in Brandon during Coldwell's term: "during the past four years, Brandon had got more from the provincial government than during the whole 26 years before that."[25] Thus, when the Conservatives promised more of the same—a new Land Titles Office, a Telephone Building, a Model School and a new Normal School, the party in power was appealing to the basic instincts of the voters to share in "the goodies" of politics by voting for the government candidate.

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24. Winnipeg Free Press, January 1, 1948 as contained in PAM, Biographies, B8, 230

25. Brandon Daily Sun, June 20, 1914

While this record of what the Conservatives had done for Brandon voters was an integral part of Coldwell's campaign, he (and his supporters) devoted much of their campaign time to attacking the several reform proposals which, in itself, suggests that the Conservatives were truly worried by the Liberal-reform alliance. For instance, the fact that much of the leadership of the "ban the bar" movement was provided by residents of Winnipeg led Brandon Conservatives to criticize this "interference" by "outsiders" in the affairs of this local community. Thus, the Hon. George Coldwell, in reference to the celebrated clergyman and author, Dr. C.W. Gordon, asked rhetorically--why did these "political parsons" come to Brandon which was "as clean and moral a city as could be found.... Why did they not stay at home and clean up their own affairs?"[26] Such criticisms could be effective in any community that was jealous of its own identity and Brandon, as the province's second--but sometimes neglected--city, was such a community.

However, some of the "outsiders" who entered the Brandon contest in 1914 had, at least, lived in the Brandon area although Nellie McClung's appeal was hardly contigent upon that fact. The fact that an estimated two thousand people attended the Women's Christian Temperance Meeting at which she was the main speaker attests both to her own individual prominence and to the fact that this particular provincial election had generated an unusually strong public interest. Nellie McClung, as was probably true of many in 1914, had become a supporter of the Liberal party

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26. Ibid., April 4, 1914. There were, of course, several Brandon ministers, such as the Rev. A.E. Smith, in the local "ban the bar" movement, but it was much better politics to focus on the Winnipeg based leadership. Ironically, Coldwell seems to have forgotten that it was his Conservative party which had "imported" candidates from Winnipeg to stand in Brandon in each of the 1900, 1904, 1908 and 1911 federal elections!

due to the failures of the Roblin government. While she, as a prohibitionist, was not totally satisfied with "ban the bar," the Conservative policy of "local option" had been such a failure that the Liberal policy must, of necessity, be supported:

> ...on 72 occasions local option had been thrown out on technicalities after it had been passed by the people and...during the past four years not one bar room had been closed....[27]

While prohibitionists, such as Nellie McClung, seem to have lost faith in the Roblin administration by 1914, it must be remembered that many residents, especially in Brandon, were opposed to the temperance proposals. For instance, the Sun reported that rather derisive comments were made at a Trades and Labor Council meeting regarding the fact that the "Grits and temperance people have joined hands...."[28] Later in 1914, a local option vote on prohibition was defeated by 300 plus votes, despite the outbreak of war which had strengthened the temperance movement.[29] While the proposal was defeated in each of the city's five wards, ward one, the so-called working class ward, rejected the proposal by the greatest margin. Therefore, S.E. Clement's personal identification with the temperance movement in 1914 was probably, to some degree, a political handicap, particularly among the working class and the "foreign" voters.

The women's suffrage movement in Manitoba was, to a considerable extent, a by-product of the temperance movement and, again, the Conservatives tended to treat this proposal rather lightly in 1914.

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[27] Winnipeg Tribune, July 7, 1914

[28] Brandon Daily Sun, April 11, 1914

[29] Ibid., December 16, 1914

Coldwell's response, for example, was that "women's suffrage was not at present needed and when the time was ripe the Roblin government would deal with it in a fair and straight forward manner."[30] Premier Roblin, however, absolutely opposed this proposal which was, in his opinion, a threat to the "sanctity of the home." Speaking in Brandon, the Conservative leader philosophized on the role of women in society as he applauded his mother, for whom he had a "sacred memory," and his wife "who had been his loving companion and helpmate for 35 years...."[31] The thought that such women should be a part of the unsavoury world of politics was more than he could bear: thus, he dismissed the notion.

However, many "issues" in 1914 would not just "fade away" and the perennial "school question" was perhaps the most enduring. It was frequently rumoured, during the Roblin years, that the Premier had secretly promised Archbishop Langevin that state supported separate schools would be re-introduced at some point in the future.[32] The 1912 Coldwell Amendments, named in honour of the Brandon M.L.A. (and the Minister of Education) who introduced them, had attempted to clarify the meaning of the word "school" and "school room" and they were designed, it would appear, to provide some further governmental assistance to existing separate schools. However, as Joseph Bernier

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30. Ibid., June 25, 1914

31. Ibid., June 26, 1914

32. Such rumours would be very disturbing to Protestant organizations such as the Orange Lodge and this could be politically significant. The support of the Orange Lodge had been vital to the Liberal party in Manitoba in the 1890s, but that support had been lessened by the disappointing Laurier-Greenway Compromise of 1897. The Orange Lodge's support for the Liberals would, however, be increased should the Conservatives move in the direction of a state supported separate school system.

had entered the Roblin cabinet shortly after the passage of the Coldwell Amendments, to become the first Roman Catholic member of the Conservative ministry since 1899, the fears of a Roblin-Langevin "plot" were enhanced. The Manitoba Free Press had initiated an extensive investigation of the Manitoba schools system in 1912. Sparked by these journalistic enquiries, many Manitobans, including "Brandonites" who were predominantly Protestant Anglo-Saxon, became deeply concerned about the nature and quality of education in local schools.[33] Many "foreign" children were reportedly receiving little or no education while others, who did attend, were receiving inadequate instruction in the English language.[34] This school system could not produce the single, unified community that so many desired.

The Conservatives, and particularly the Minister of Education, were on the defensive on this issue. Coldwell spent a considerable amount of time at his nominating meeting defending the government's record in education: for example, a special school for Ruthenian teachers had been established in addition to the existing Normal School in Brandon. The number of school inspectors had been increased from nine, in 1899, to forty one, in 1914.[35] In addition, Coldwell sought assistance from other quarters. Legal opinions which argued that the Coldwell Amendments did not, in any way, alter the existing agreement[36] were cited. Robert Crawford, a railway employee and a Roman Catholic, spoke for Coldwell at several "north end" meetings. In his words, the Liberals, by re-introducing this very divisive question, had insulted the local Catholic community who "realized that they would never get separate schools and were resigned to it."[37] However, the most ingenious response to Liberal accusations was that adopted at a Conservative meeting in the Polish Hall in the city's north end. While the speakers debated the issue of the school children's competence in English, someone reportedly went outside to collect a group of children who were playing nearby. To the delight of the Conservatives who were present, and to the Sun who reported the incident, all of the children selected in this "random sample" were able to speak English adequately.[38] Surely that was convincing proof of the effectiveness of the current school system! However, as Premier Roblin later attributed Liberal gains in 1914 to the fears of the Orange Lodge that the Roblin government intended to re-introduce a state supported separate school system,[39] it would appear that Conservative attempts to "defuse" that political issue were largely unsuccessful elsewhere in the province.

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[33] The "foreign born" percentage of Brandonites had reached 14.01% of the total population by 1911. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2

[34] Brandon Daily Sun, July 3, 1914. This charge was made by the Rev. A.E. Smith, the popular minister of First Methodist who would later become a Dominion Labor Party M.L.A. Smith supported the Liberal candidate in the 1914 provincial election.

[35] Ibid., June 10, 1914

The Roblin forces probably were more successful in discrediting Liberal proposals for direct legislation on the emotional grounds

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36. Ibid., July 2, 1914

37. Ibid., July 6, 1914

38. Ibid.

39. Winnipeg Tribune, July 11, 1914. It should be noted that the membership in the Orange Lodge had been growing significantly in Canada in recent years. For example, 100 new lodges and 17,000 new members had been added in the year 1912 alone. Brandon Daily Sun, August 26, 1913

that it was "unBritish" and that it was incompatible with the principles of responsible government.[40] Premier Roblin also made use of the "unBritish" issue when he attacked Brandon Socialists, who were presumably supporting the local Liberal candidate, by referring to the

> Socialists parade in Winnipeg, when the Union Jack was trampled down and the red flag substituted... [he] warned Britishers that they had a few of these men in Brandon-men who would trample the flag and substitute anarchistic principles.[41]

This appeal probably had a considerable impact in the predominantly British community of Brandon.

While the 1914 election in Brandon may have focused on issues to a rather unusual degree, the "mechanics" of the political process were still of the utmost importance. For example, paid canvassers were active on behalf of both candidates.[42]

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[40] Ibid., June 26, 1914

[41] Ibid., June 26, 1914

[42] However, the practice of "hiring" canvassers could present difficulties: the Conservatives, for instance, were divided by the fact that some of the canvassers were paid three dollars a day while others received only two. Manitoba Free Press, July 4, 1914. While the "volunteer political armies" of the future had not yet arrived, the "number" of party members seemed to be regarded as significant although the claim of the Young Conservatives to the effect that they had seven hundred members by early June 1914 (Brandon Daily Sun, June 3, 1914) surely was an exaggeration. It is also interesting to note that politics still contained a unique cultural content as regular meetings of the Young Conservatives featured such items as "songs by Mr. E.A. McGuinness, recitations by Mr. W.J. Rawson and comic selections by Mr. Harry Costello." Ibid., June 4, 1914. Perhaps this aspect of politics was to be one of the casualties of the World War.

In addition, there were the usual charges and counter charges of "vote-buying" in 1914. The Conservatives were allegedly promising jobs to members of the "foreign community" if they would work for the Hon. George Coldwell[43] while the Liberals were accused of employing the talents (and the wares) of "a well known wholesale liquor dealer from Kamsack, Saskatchewan [who] had been sent by the Scott government to work in the Liberal interests in Brandon and vicinity."[44] The Liberals also accused Coldwell of the fraudulent use, on the eve of the election, of a forged telegram in which W.T. Edgecombe, Grand Master of the Orange Lodge, supposedly endorsed both the Coldwell Amendments and the Roblin government.[45] Certainly both the Tribune and the Free Press had stressed the political significance of what they had earlier described as the "defection" of Edgecombe, a long time Conservative.[46] Any success which Coldwell, or his supporters, may have had in lessening the impression that the Orange Lodge had deserted the Conservatives en masse would undoubtedly be politically significant-even if only to neutralize the effect of the earlier stories of such "defections." Thus, this election eve "roorback" could have been of some importance.

What is most interesting about the Brandon result is that Coldwell, despite the fact that his majority was reduced from 252 to 163, did do well in comparison to the Conservative party as a whole which saw its majority reduced to four seats before the three deferred elections in the north were held. The Liberals attributed Coldwell's victory over their S.E. Clement, by a vote of 1,897 to 1,734, to the number of government employees who were forced to work for the Conservative candidate[47] and to the corrupt political practices that had been employed.[48] However, it must be remembered that Brandon had been represented on the government side of the house (by a cabinet minister) and according to all accounts, the city had benefitted as a result. Were these "political goodies" more important in 1914 than issues, particularly when one of those issues-the ban the bar proposal-was rather ill-received in this urban community? This vote for a "ministerialist" candidate would seem to indicate that this was so. Therefore, while the economic recession of 1913, which had been quite politically significant at the municipal level, does not seem to have affected politics at the provincial level in 1914, the "economics" of being on the "right" side of the legislature may have been of importance to Brandon voters who continued to elect a government supporter, as they had consistently done since 1886.

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[43] Manitoba Free Press, July 8, 1914

[44] Brandon Daily Sun, July 2, 1914. This, however, is the only reference to the Saskatchewan Liberal machine's involvement in the Brandon riding. As the Scott forces were allegedly very active in that campaign, they must have concentrated on other constituencies.

[45] Manitoba Free Press, July 14, 1914

[46] Ibid., July 1, 1914

The World War, which followed so closely upon the provincial election, introduced a totally new dimension to the lives of Manitobans. The impact of what proved to be a four year long struggle would be immeasurable to a large degree: yet the outbreak of hostilities did have an evident impact on the Brandon community in certain specific instances. For example, the fact that many "foreigners" had settled in the Brandon area took on a new significance. While this city was far removed from the war zone, the presence in the local area of some 250 "Austrian Poles," who were legally members of the Austrian Hungarian reserve army,[49] was cause for some concern. In addition, the fact that "in the early dawn of the morning some of the Brandon people saw an aeroplane flying low over the city and then going west"[50] had increased those apprehensions. As a result, J.A.M. Aikins, the local Member of Parliament, petitioned the federal government to establish an alien internment camp in the city.[51] That, in fact, was soon to be done. The most immediate concerns about "foreigners" had been met; however, other problems would emerge as the War continued.

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[47] Ibid., July 11, 1914

[48] This was the conclusion of the recently established (pro-Liberal) Brandon News which was reprinted in the Winnipeg Tribune, July 17, 1914

The outbreak of war also encouraged the supporters of the temperance movement to renew their efforts. A nation at war could not afford the loss of production that was often a byproduct of the excessive consumption of alcohol. The fact that Brandon might become a training depot where many young men, perhaps with little worldly experience, would be brought together only enhanced this concern. The temperance supporters, therefore, immediately attempted to make Brandon a "dry" area by use of the "local option" provision. However, Brandon electors at the time of the 1914 municipal elections, in an unusually large vote, rejected the proposal (which would have banned the sale of all intoxicating liquors in the municipality) by a vote of 1377 to 1042.[52] Urban opposition to prohibition, which Sifton had noted some years before and which may have been a factor in the recent provincial election in Brandon, remained as a major force despite the outbreak of the War.

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[49] Brandon Daily Sun, August 3, 1914

[50] PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 191 , 106322, J.A.M. Aikins to Borden, November 12, 1914

[51] Ibid.

[52] Brandon Daily Sun, December 16, 1914

The War, however, does not appear to have been a major factor in that fall's municipal elections. Instead, high taxes and the need for civic economy predominated--as they had done the year before.[53] While the issues remained the same, the roles had been reversed as Harry Cater, who was making his second bid for the mayoralty, now campaigned on a platform of civic economy--a policy with which he would hereafter be identified--while his opponent, Alderman J.A. McDonald, who had served as chairman of the Finance Committee, was blamed (perhaps unfairly) for the continuing high taxation rates and for what had proved to be an expensive (and unproductive) civic survey.[54] Consequently, Cater, whose principal support had been located in the working class ward one and in his "own" ward five in 1913, now won every city ward and the election by the decisive vote of 1,580 to 860[55], a result which was presumably due to his more pronounced advocacy of civic economy and reduced taxation. For two years in a row, the "administration" candidate had been defeated--presumably as a result of increased taxation. Thus, the continuing recession, rather than the War, continued to be the predominant factor in municipal politics as late as December 1914.[56]

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[53] As noted earlier, the city's relief costs, however, were increased as a result of the War. Ibid., August 29, 1914

[54] The civic survey conducted by the American urban affairs specialist was reported to have cost $6,872.00. Ibid., December 3, 1914. Ironically, despite the apparent success of "business" candidates in the last two mayoralty elections, both men tried to avoid being labelled as "Rosser Avenue" candidates. While McDonald protested that he had widespread support and that it was not the "Rosser Avenue interests that had induced him to run" (Ibid.), Harry Cater "was glad to say he was the people's candidate, although he had always given--and always would give--Rosser Avenue its fair share." Ibid., December 15, 1914. To be labelled as a Rosser Avenue--or perhaps any special interest--candidate was regarded obviously as being the political equivalent to the kiss of death at that time!

The harsh reality of what a world war meant was apparent to Brandonites by early 1915, as the first casualty list which included Brandon names was announced.[57] At almost precisely the same moment, a "political bombshell" struck all Manitoba as the Roblin government resigned on May 12. While the Conservative government had survived the 1914 election with some difficulty, the unveiling of the infamous "Parliamentary Buildings scandal" rather quickly led to the Roblin ministry's resignation.[58] The political picture was suddenly reversed. T.C. Norris, M.L.A. for the neighbouring constituency of Lansdowne, was now premier and Brandon, for the moment, was represented on the "wrong" side of the house. Although Norris did reportedly offer J.D. McGregor, a well known Brandon cattleman (and a close friend of Clifford Sifton), the post of Minister of Agriculture, the future Lieutenant Governor declined.[59] As a result, Brandon was not represented in the new Norris government in 1915. Manitoba's second city had been denied what many Brandonites had frequently claimed, in the past, as their natural right.

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[55] While Cater won all five of the city's wards, his victories in the downtown business sector were relatively narrow--136 to 119 in ward two and 124 to 101 in ward three. However, he won the huge ward five by a vote of 585 to 214 and ward one by 394 to 204. Ibid., December 16, 1914

[56] Despite the fact that economic conditions appear to have been the predominant factor in these elections, there was still no real "labour" candidate in the 1914 municipal election. George S. Morris, one of Brandon's most prominent Socialists, did stand in ward five as a "working man--the first candidate from the ranks." Ibid., December 10, 1914. However, the fact that he received only eighty-two votes in that contest suggests that he was not really accepted as a working man's candidate by the "labour" movement.

[57] The Hon. George Coldwell's son was among the first of Brandon men to be listed as killed in action: fortunately, the report proved to be erroneous and young Coldwell was found to be a prisoner of war. Ibid., May 8, 1915

While Norris struggled with the inevitably difficult task of "cabinet making," the shattered Conservative party attempted to pull itself together in preparation for the provincial election that would follow the formation of the new government. As Roblin and his entire cabinet had "retired" from politics, the Conservatives' first task was to find a new leader. While several names had previously been mentioned as possibilities when Roblin's retirement--for health reasons--had been rumoured earlier, the list of potential nominees was now shorter as the Conservatives--including fifty from Brandon, five of whom were voting delegates[60]--met in convention in Winnipeg

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58. Although it had been rumoured that Roblin's personal health might necessitate his own retirement, a rumour to which Roblin himself gave some credence (PAM, Colin H. Campbell Papers, Roblin to Colin H. Campbell, November 10, 1913), the general public was unprepared for the resignation of the entire administration.

59. Brandon Daily Sun, March 15, 1935. It is interesting to note that Norris showed no apparent interest in considering S.E. Clement (who might have felt that he had "earned" a reward by standing unsuccessfully for the party in 1914) for the cabinet.

60. Ibid., July 13, 1915

in July 1915. Although Hugh John Macdonald, the ex-Premier, and Winnipeg lawyer W. Sanford Evans were still considered as possibilities, the Hon. George Coldwell, who had previously been considered as a potential leader, had returned quietly to his law practice. Furthermore, the name of J.A.M. Aikins, Brandon's M.P. and another of those previously considered "potential" successors, was not even mentioned in the pre-convention newspaper reports.

Brandon's M.P., J.A.M. Aikins, was, however, a prominent figure at the convention. First of all, he was chosen convention chairman, a responsibility which he accepted, although, as he did so, he disclaimed any "...intention of entering Provincial politics."[61] However, when his "unexpected" nomination was greeted with applause by 1,600 "singing, cheering"[62] Conservatives, Aikins acquiesced dramatically: "If you say so, I must accept."[63]

The Conservatives had chosen a new leader who had little previous connection with the Roblin ministry.[64] While Aikins's personal qualifications—the press frequently described him as "one of the abliest jurists in Canada"[65]—and his family's political record[66] would be stressed, great emphasis was also placed upon the fact that Aikins, in 1914, had not endorsed all of the Conservative policies and that he had campaigned on behalf of only a few selected candidates.[67] The platform on which Aikins, and his fellow candidates, would now stand was described as "the peoples platform,"[68] rather than the Conservative platform. In addition, the party's candidates in 1915 election would all be described as Independent Conservatives. The party was clearly attempting to refurbish its scandal-ridden image. That task, predictably, was not to be an easy one.

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[61] Ibid., July 14, 1915

[62] Ibid., July 16, 1915

[63] Ibid.

[64] It should also be noted that the party's second choice was reported to be W.H. Sharpe, M.P. for Lisgar, who also had a minimal association with the Roblin government.

[65] Brandon Daily Sun, July 16, 1915

[66] Aikin's father served in Macdonald's cabinet from 1869 to 1872, as Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba from 1882 to 1888, and, subsequently, as a member of the Canadian Senate until his death. Ibid.

While all the issues that had been part of the 1914 election--i.e., "ban the bar," women's suffrage, direct legislation, and compulsory education--were "part and parcel" of the 1915 election, the new and clearly predominant issue was obviously that of the "scandal." As a result, the key question in the 1915 campaign in Brandon (and elsewhere) was whether or not Aikins could disassociate himself from the "scandalous" record of the Roblin ministry. The supporters of S.E. Clement (who had won the nomination again--against J.W. Fleming, an ex-mayor and the defeated Liberal candidate of 1907) were naturally determined that this should not occur. For example, the Winnipeg Evening Tribune noted that Aikins was a friend and political ally of both Roblin and Rogers and that he had played a "behind the scenes" role in the days preceding the "fall" of the government.[69] The Free Press stressed the fact that eighteen of the so-called Independent Conservatives had sat in the last legislature as Roblin Conservatives, five had previously stood unsuccessfully as

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[67] Ibid., August 2, 1915

[68] Ibid., July 20, 1915

[69] Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 17, 1915

Roblin candidates, five had had business dealings with the Roblin government, and both Aikins and Sharpe had supported the Roblin ministry on the campaign trail.[70] The memory of Rodmond P. Roblin could not be swept sway so easily!

The Conservatives tried, in vain, to focus the public's attention on certain selected issues. Thus, they argued that there was no need for direct legislation as the Manitoba Legislature had never refused any legislation "which the people really wanted...."[71] Their clerical opponents were critized for partisan activity and for the defeat of a liquor referendum in Brandon in 1902.[72] In addition, railway employee Robert Crawford made a strong appeal for the locally important C.P.R. vote by stressing Aikins's personal connection with the railway company.[73] Aikins's record of service as an M.P. was also stressed: ex-Mayor Hughes was quoted as stating that Aikins "has undoubtedly been the best representative the city has ever had...."[74] In addition, the Conservatives, displaying an awareness that the War itself could be politically significant, even in a provincial election, reminded the voters that Aikins had supported the Conservatives' Naval Act of 1912 while the Liberals in Ottawa, with endorsation of T.C. Norris, had opposed the proposal whereby Canada would have provided the cash to pay for three dreadnoughts for Great Britain. According to the Sun,

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[70] Manitoba Free Press, August 5, 1915

[71] Brandon Daily Sun, July 23, 1915

[72] Several local clergymen had joined with the Liberals to defeat the local measure, presumably on the ground that they found the proposal to be inadequate. Ibid., July 28, 1915

[73] Aikins had acted as solicitor for the C.P.R. for many years.

[74] Brandon Daily Sun, August 3, 1915

"those three super dreadnoughts, in the opinion of naval experts, would have sufficed to storm the Dardanelles."[75] The establishment of the interned enemy aliens camp and the quartering of two thousand horses in the city were cited as evidence of the federal Conservatives' beneficial administration. However, the Conservatives were in great trouble and not even the "re-cycling" of previous Conservative achievements--i.e., Confederation, the building of the C.P.R., and the expansion of Manitoba's boundaries could save their leader!

Despite the fact that the Conservatives could only credit Stephen E. Clement with the single achievement of constructing the "Clement Block"--which had been designed by a Minneapolis architect and built by a Winnipeg contractor,[76] the Liberal candidate, who had lost by 163 votes in 1914, won a crushing victory by a vote of 1,914 to 1,213. Aikins, who lost every poll, did reasonably well only in the city's east end polls, where the railway vote was most heavily concentrated.[77] Although the Sun bitterly assailed the temperance people for their failure to support Aikins with his promise of absolute prohibition, and while it lamented the fact that Aikins, as leader, had been forced to neglect his own constituency,[78] the Liberal victory throughout the province was so decisive (forty two Liberals to only five Conservatives) that there could only be one explanation for the result. While the Conservatives, in 1914, had withstood successfully both the impact of the 1913 recession and the combined assault of the Liberal-reform alliance, they had been punished in this wartime election--although the War itself does not appear to have been a significant factor--for the sins of those who had preceded them. Brandon, in electing S.E. Clement, was very much in the mainstream of Manitoba politics in 1915.

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[75] Ibid., August 4, 1915

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., August 7, 1915

[78] Ibid.

The birth of a new government in that era was marked by its own "political aftermath" and the Liberal victory in 1915 was no exception. Manitoba Liberals had been out of office for sixteen years and it was time to reward the politically deserving. For example, A.C. Fraser, the defeated Liberal candidate in the 1903 provincial election, was appointed police magistrate in place of W.H. Bates, the recent Conservative appointee.[79] J.W. Fleming, the party's unsuccessful standard bearer in 1907 and the man who had lost the nomination to S.E. Clement in 1915, was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.[80] The fact that two lesser known Brandon Liberals were named to replace two dismissed Conservatives at the local jail caused the Sun to note sarcastically that "the prisoners are now safely under the care of good Liberal turnkeys."[81] In total, seventy-seven justices of the peace, eight police magistrates and five police constables had been reportedly dismissed by the new Liberal government as of September 1915.[82] The fact that this information does not appear to have generated much public interest would suggest that such "firings" and "hirings" were generally regarded as a normal part of the political process in

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[79] Ibid., August 16, 1915

[80] Ibid., September 3, 1915

[81] Ibid., November 29, 1915

[82] Ibid., September 20, 1915

Brandon and elsewhere in 1915.

The Liberals, during the campaigns of 1914 and 1915, had been strong advocates of women's suffrage: specifically, Norris had promised that women would receive the franchise if it could be proved that they, in fact, desired that privilege. A petition signed by a number of women equivalent to 15% of Manitoba's electorate would, it was stated, constitute such proof. As a result, the provincial Council of Women immediately launched a province wide campaign for such support. Public meetings, such as the one which occurred in Brandon on September 2, 1915, were held in support of this objective. While Lillian Benyon Thomas, one of Manitoba's most celebrated suffragettes, was the principal speaker on that occasion, Mayor Cater also proclaimed his support for female suffrage "as it would add an unpurchaseable vote...to the electoral list."[83] The Sun, however, was less enthusiastic as it feared that it would be many years before women could be

> well versed in the political issues, and though they will add a volume of unpurchaseable voters to the lists, only by education will discernment come to them when astute politicians have the presentation of the issues.[84]

Clifford Sifton also retained his reservations about the reform soon to be introduced by the party with whom he had once been most closely associated.

> I suppose that there is no doubt that women suffrage will be adopted in Manitoba during the next year.... There is no use, however, in the Free Press setting

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83. Ibid., September 3, 1915

84. Ibid.

> itself against what is inevitable.... I will be glad, however, if you assume as little responsibility for it as possible under the circumstances....[85]

While the circumstances of the War provided women with a new opportunity to play an equal economic role to men, the Liberals in Manitoba had adopted the proposal for women's suffrage in 1914 and their accession to power in 1915 presumably made that reform, as Sifton suggested, inevitable. The War may have facilitated the passage of that reform: it did not cause it.

The women's rights movement was itself stimulated by the assurance that their campaign for the suffrage would be successful. As a result, they soon began to explore other possibilities. While their campaign for the appointment of a woman to the city police staff was unsuccessful, due to the need for civic economy and the expressed belief that the caretaker's wife could conduct whatever personal "searches" were necessary,[86] the local Council of Women did succeed in electing Brandon's first woman to public office in 1915. While Mrs. Irwin's election to the school board may have been rather anti-climatic as all civic candidates were elected by acclamation that autumn, a land mark--of sorts--had, nevertheless, been established.[87]

While neither the continuing economic recession nor the War were major factors in the provincial elections of 1914 and 1915, the recession was particularly consequential to developments at the municipal level in 1915—a fact which suggests that that level of government is most responsive to changing economic conditions?[88] Certainly, the impact of the recession was still most evident as Cater, who had been elected on a "civic economy" platform, attempted to cope with declining civic revenues.

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[85] PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 202, 160119, Sifton to Dafoe, October 12, 1915

[86] In addition it was noted that only some fifty women had been arrested in Brandon during 1914. Brandon Daily Sun, October 7, 1915

[87] It is interesting to note that Mrs. Irwin was nominated by two men and one of her male nominators was the incumbent member whom she was eventually elected to replace. Ibid., December 14, 1915

Although an estimated 64% of the civic budget was "uncontrollable," reductions were made in several areas during 1915. For example, the Board of Works budget was reduced by $10,000 and the police budget was "cut" by $5,000,[89] totals which were partly achieved by reducing salaries.[90] Thanks to the decision of the provincial government to expend some $12,000 on sewage construction, some "make-work" jobs were created at the going rate of 20¢ per hour.[91] While the War itself had not yet had made any real impact on the local economy, there was a possibility, in late 1915, that the government might quarter a substantial number of troops in Brandon during the coming winter, a decision which would generate an estimated revenue of one thousand dollars per day.[92] However, the cliche that war was good for business had not yet proved to be true for Brandon in 1915.

While the Brandon community became totally absorbed for a time by the horrors of the C.P.R. train wreck which claimed seventeen lives on January 13, and the disastrous fire which swept the Syndicate Building in which four people perished just four days later, the War in Europe was clearly the predominant feature of life in Brandon by 1916. The decision to train the 181st Battalion in the city injected a hugh cash flow into the area as the battalion's payroll alone was an estimated $50,000 a month.[93] As a result of this artificially stimulated economy and due to the number of young men who had enlisted, there developed, in fact, a severe labour shortage, especially on the farms, by early August 1916.[94] Thanks to the improved economic condition and the charitable endeavours of the Brandon Patriotic Fund,[95] there were only six families "on relief" by the year's end.[96] Brandon, at last, was benefitting economically as a result of the War.

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[88] Probably Mayor Cater's constant identification in 1915 with civic economy combined with the predominance of the War produced the political circumstances which led to Mayor Cater's (and all candidates for public office) re-election by acclamation in 1915.

[89] Brandon Daily Sun, December 11, 1915

[90] Ibid., March 2, 1915

[91] Ibid., January 9, 1915

[92] Ibid., October 18, 1915

The War may also have been a factor in the second "temperance" vote held in Brandon in March 1916. While a proposal to ban the sale of all intoxicating liquors in the municipality had been defeated by a vote of 1,377 to 1,042 in late 1914, the results in 1916 were markedly different. Certainly the campaign was conducted in a very professional manner in 1916: the temperance forces had committee rooms, a campaign manager and a "get out the vote" election day organization. In addition, both J.A.M. Aikins, the provincial Conservative leader, and S.E. Clement, Brandon's Liberal M.L.A., spoke publically on their behalf. Although the margin of victory (i.e., 1547 to 1210)[97] was much narrower in Brandon than in the province as a whole, where the proposal was endorsed by a margin of two to one, the vote was still a reversal of the 1914 decision. The fact that liquor could still be imported legally (in quantity) and that only the hotel bars had been closed may help explain why the strongest opposition to the proposal was found in the city's north and east end areas. While all sectors of the community would have been equally affected by the more extreme 1914 proposal, the working class probably would be most seriously affected by this "ban the bar" measure. The 1916 proposal was, thus, to a degree, a class measure and the voters responded accordingly. One assumes as well, although it cannot be proved, that the prolonged war experience encouraged some voters to respond differently in 1916 than they had in 1914. Hopefully, "banning the bar" would facilitate that greater war effort that so many were now calling for in 1916.

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[93] Ibid., April 18, 1916

[94] Ironically, it was the much maligned "foreigners"--i.e., Galician labourers--who were the principal beneficiaries as these men, who constituted the bulk of the unskilled labour force in the city, threatened to leave their jobs "macadamizing" 6th Street at a pay of $2.00 per day in order to join the harvest gangs at $2.50 per day. While the City Engineer wanted to "let them quit," Council agreed to raise their salaries to $2.25 per day as, in fact, it was customary to do so during harvests when the competition for help became greater. Ibid., August 2, 1916. One suspects that the fact that these men were "aliens" accounts for the greater reluctance to raise their wages in this wartime instance.

[95] The Patriotic Fund was assisting 203 families (whose bread winner had joined the services) at a monthly cost of $3,500 earlier in 1916. Ibid., January 29, 1916

[96] Ibid., December 23, 1916

That Brandonites regarded the struggle in Europe with increasing apprehension was evident in the manner in which they responded to several related issues in 1916. For instance, the Brandon Daily Sun welcomed the decision of the Australian government to disfranchise all German born electors for the duration of the War and to introduce a literacy test for all electors.[98] The Sun further suggested that the Canadian government should adopt similar measures prior to the next federal election. As there was no public opposition to this rather significant recommendation, one might assume that there was general agreement with the proposal which would, in fact, be implemented a year later. Secondly, the organization of the Brandon Citizens' Recruiting league in 1916 which, with the financial assistance of city council, began a campaign to educate the public on the immense need for additional volunteers[99] suggests that there was widespread recognition of the need for a greater national war effort. The traditional recruiting system, whereby officers paid the costs of recruitment for their own units, had failed as the costs had become prohibitive.[100] While most spokesmen urged the federal government to assume all the obligations for volunteer recruitment, both the local Recruiting League and the Sun noted in early 1916 that the "demand for compulsory military service is gaining ground in Canada."[101] When Prime Minister Borden visited Brandon in December of that year, as part of a campaign to encourage "National Registration," an estimated 3,500-4,000 people from all parts of south-western Manitoba were present, despite the -50°F temperature. It was, in the Prime Minister's opinion, the most satisfying meeting of his entire tour.[102] In fact, these several calls for a "greater national war effort" went almost unchallenged as the only recorded reservation was that of A.E. Hill, a prominent Liberal, who stressed the need to conscript wealth as well as manpower.[103] The War was an integral part of Brandon by 1916 and the local populace were well prepared to meet that challenge--in all its facets.

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[97] Despite a severe March storm, 77% of the voters went to the polls. Some temperance supporters believed that the March date had been selected for the very reason that winter weather would hinder the temperance forces. This certainly did not occur in Brandon. Ibid., March 14, 1916

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[98] Ibid., March 15, 1916

[99] Ibid., February 8, 1916.

[100] The costs of recruiting the first units had been only two dollars per man but this figure had risen considerably as officers had to travel to more distant points to find the necessary volunteers. Ibid., April 24, 1916

[101] Ibid., August 10, 1916

The growing significance of the War was evident even in that year's mayoralty election. While Alderman Fisher, Cater's opponent, attempted to make the mayor's alleged domination of city council into the major issue of the campaign,[104] the fact that governments normally exercise extraordinary powers in wartime may have weakened the effect of that criticism. In addition, the "war record" of these two candidates became politically significant-- at least to a degree. For example, Cater asked rhetorically "how many men...would have been recruited from Brandon if all citizens had acted similarly toward the Patriotic Fund as Alderman Fisher had?"[105] While Alderman Fisher claimed that he and his family had sacrificed as much as any other and while he lamented the fact that some were trying "to exploit the

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[102] Ibid., December 20, 1916

[103] Ibid., April 4, 1916

[104] The Sun, too, had been very critical earlier in 1916 when the Mayor had vetoed a decision of council: Harry Cater was assuming "power which it was never intended should be vested in his office. He assumes the position as a dictator...." Ibid., July 29, 1916. However, the Sun still supported Cater in his re-election bid later in 1916.

[105] Ibid., December 19, 1916

the war in the present election,"[106] one suspects that his protests were to no avail. It was also alleged that Alderman Fisher was making a special appeal for the "ethnic vote" which caused the Sun to warn its readers that the

> dominance of those people at this time would be a very unfortunate thing. While many of them are naturalized British subjects, there are hundreds of them of the enemy race, and some of them have many near relatives in the ranks of the Teutonic hordes. That they should be allowed any voice in our affairs in this crisis is greatly to be deplored.[107]

While one cannot attribute Harry Cater's decisive re-election by a vote of 1131 to 481 to any single factor, it would appear that the War, and the emotions which it aroused, could be politically significant even at the mayoralty level in 1916.

The community's involvement in the war effort had been most marked by 1916: it became almost total during the following few months. 1917, of course, was a crucial year in that the possibility of a defeat in Europe seemed more likely than at any other time. As a result, the decisions of the Borden government--i.e., the enactment of conscription; the passage of the War Times Election Act; the formation of the Union Government; and, finally, the general election--predominated over all other public concerns during that year. In many ways, the stage had been set in Brandon for some of these developments in that the need for the disfranchisement of aliens and the enactment of conscription had been proclaimed locally before. Their passage now was accepted essentially as a matter of course.

As a result, there were few developments in the local community that were not associated with the "major" questions of that year.

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., November 18, 1916

One significant development, although its effect would not be fully apparent until later, was the emergence of "labour" as a more significant economic and political force in the Brandon community. The fact that "labour" was becoming a force of some consequence in 1917 was evident when railway employees, by threatening to quit, forced the C.P.R. to dismiss three Austrians who had claimed to be Russian.[108] The establishment in July 1917 of a Labor Representation League with ambitious plans to field candidates for all municipal offices in that year's annual elections was also a most significant decision. Although all three "labour-type" candidates who did stand as aldermanic candidates in 1917 were defeated, labour's political interests had, at least, been more firmly established.

However, the most celebrated and significant political event of 1917 was clearly the federal wartime election of that year. While its primary purpose was to determine the role Canada would play thereafter in the war, the election was significant for a number of other reasons as well. Some women would exercise their first franchise in a federal election while many aliens would be disfranchised. The Liberal party would be badly divided by the issues of conscription and coalition while the Conservative party would transform itself into the Unionist Government. And, it was the War--and the fears generated by that War--that was common to all these events.

One of the major issues preceding that election was the question of whether "enemy aliens" should be permitted to vote. The local newspaper had expressed its reservations on several occasions in the past and other organizations became more vocal as the federal election loomed nearer. For example, the Brandon branch of the Great War Veterans' Association informed the Prime Minister:

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[108] The C.P.R. agreed, under pressure, that it would hire British labourers, whenever they were available. Ibid., July 27, 1917

> That this meeting...urges...the desirability of disfranchising all residents of alien enemy nationality during the period of the war and believing as we do, that a nation that is openly hostile to the cause of Britain and her allies is less dangerous than a stab in the back policy pursued by King Constantine and the Greek government we ask that residents of Greek nationality should also be precluded the use of franchise for the period of the war.[109]

The officers and membership of the Brandon County Orange Lodge were of a similar mind, although they expressed themselves more bluntly:

> ...we think it very unfair to the better element of our citizens that the small number remaining should be faced at the poll by a solid phalanx of voters of enemy alien birth, who...are all of them secretly and many of them openly enemy sympathizers, already organiging [sic] in opposition to any government which will endeavor to force conscription....[110]

The decision to disfranchise such enemy "alien voters," as announced in the Wartime Elections Act, would obviously be well received by many in the Brandon community.

In the meantime, the Liberals had been quite hopeful (in 1916) about their future prospects in the Brandon riding. The local Conservatives had lost the advantage of having the "sitting member" due to Aikins's decision to enter provincial politics in 1915. J.A. Calder, Saskatchewan's Minister of Railways and the Liberal organizer in Western Canada, was particularly optimistic: especially if the local Liberals should select a prominent Grain Grower as the candidate:

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[109] PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 66, 33506, W.G. Oakey, Secretary of Great War Veterans, Brandon Branch, to Borden, April 24, 1917

[110] Ibid., vol. 219, 123160, W.H. Maker and Alex Pue to [?], July 26, 1917

> The impression I carried away from Brandon after speaking to a good many prominent Liberals is that the Conservative organization in that part of Manitoba is practically shot to pieces, and that there should be little doubt about the election of the Liberal candidate. Unless something very unusual happens it seems to me that there should be very little doubt about our carrying at least ten or eleven of the fifteen seats probably more.[111]

"Something very unusual" did, however, happen in 1917. First of all, the newly enfranchised women began "to take matters into their own hands." Their role, to this point, had been minimal. Admittedly, the local Conservative Association, with considerable publicity, had invited their female supporters to a political meeting in mid-June: however, those same Conservatives had then proceeded to elect an all male delegation to their provincial council![112] While the Conservatives did later provide women with a greater role in their party,[113] it was the local Council of Women who emerged as the most significant female political force. Fearing that partisan politics would be divisive and detrimental to the war effort, the Brandon Council of Women first urged the conference of Western Liberals which met in Winnipeg in August 1917 to prevent a wartime election at all costs.[114]

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[111] PAC, Wilfrid Laurier Papers, vol. 703, 193726, J.A. Calder to Laurier, November 24, 1916

[112] Brandon Daily Sun, June 16, 1917

[113] It would appear as if the Conservatives were actively courting the female vote by mid 1917. For instance, they now proceeded to elect a woman as first vice-president of the local Conservative Association and to add twenty-five women to the local executive council. In addition, women moved all of the resolutions at an association meeting in mid 1917. Whether these steps indicated that women had achieved a meaningful role or whether this was "tokenism" was something that remained to be determined.

[114] Brandon Daily Sun, August 8, 1917

Secondly, they decided to hold a massive "Win the War" rally in Brandon, a step which was soon copied by many other Western Canadian communities. This "non-partisan" rally,[115] which was addressed by such non-political figures as Chief Justice Mathers and Captain Best of the Y.M.C.A. Military Department, was so successful that local Conservatives decided to organize their own "Win the War" rally.

A patriotic and non-partisan "Win the War" appeal could be particularly attractive to the new female vote and to the "floating" vote which, in total, probably constituted a majority of the votes in 1917. The Conservatives, who were currently in office and who had won the Brandon riding at the last election, presumably stood to benefit the most from an emphasis on the need "to finish the job." Certainly the Sun, a pro-Conservative voice since 1912, claimed that there was a new spirit abroad in the land and that Western Canadians would "show the machine politicians of all political stripes that they propose to run the country in the interest of the boys in the trenches."[116]

The emergence of the Grain Growers as a local political force was another important new factor for Brandon area politicians to consider in 1917. J.A. Calder, as noted, had already recommended that the Liberals select a prominent Grain Grower as their candidate. The Grain Growers, however, had decided to enter directly into federal politics: thus, they themselves decided to hold a nominating convention in August 1917. In fact the Grain Growers convention was held in conjunction with the newly formed Labor Representation League, an organization of politically concerned workers, union and non-union alike, whose original objective had been to ensure labour representation in the forthcoming mayoralty and aldermanic elections.[117] When the Grain Growers and Labor met in this joint convention, four names were placed in nomination. Rev. A.E. Smith, the popular minister of First Methodist Church since 1913, was the labour candidate and there were, in addition, three "farmer" candidates. Although Rev. A.E. Smith's support was constant throughout the balloting, fluctuating only from fifty-one to fifty-seven votes, the larger "farmer vote" subsequently united to elect Roderick McKenzie with eighty votes on the fourth ballot.[118]

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[115] Although the Council of Women attempted to conduct their rally in a totally non-partisan manner, at least one speaker--Police Magistrate A.C. Fraser (and an ex-Liberal M.P.P.)--was later accused of being unduly critical of Prime Minister Borden. Ibid., August 17, 1917

[116] Ibid., August 31, 1917

Although the Conservatives and pro-conscription Liberals met, on several occasions, to formulate plans for the nomination of a single "Win the War" or "Fusion" candidate, this proved to be a very difficult task. Although the Liberals and Conservatives had an equal number of delegates, they had caucused separately and they proceeded to support their own choices. Therefore, despite the fact that the 180 voting delegates who met together on October 23 cast 14 separate ballots in an eight and one half hour period,[119] they could reach no decision. The Conservative delegates apparently supported Sir Augustus Nanton, a Winnipeg businessman, from the first ballot while Liberal voters eventually coalesced around United Grain Growers president T.A. Crerar, whose support increased from thirty-eight votes to a total of eighty-six, as other less prominent nominees such as H. Cater, Rev. A.E. Smith and J.D. McGregor dropped by the wayside. As no candidate had received the required 75% of the total vote, the organizers finally adjourned the convention. The so-called "Win the War" sentiment had failed to overcome the more predominant partisan considerations.

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[117] Ibid., July 3, 1917

[118] Ibid., August 3, 1917. Rev. A.E. Smith, it should be noted, was not as radical at this point in his political career as he would later become. He did believe in the need for government control over war profiteering in 1917 but he was also a strong advocate of the need for conscription.

[119] Women comprised only about 5 or 6 of those 180 voting delegates. That was the extent of the political equality that had been secured. Ibid., October 23, 1917

The political stragists had hoped, in vain, that a non-resident candidate might succeed in unifying the delegates at the October 23 nominating convention. After both Crerar and Nanton had failed in that regard, public sentiment began to favour a local candidate to be selected at a meeting convened by "citizens at large," rather than by politicians. While the mayor rejected the suggestion of the Great War Veterans' Association that he, Cater, should call such a meeting, he did agree to convene a meeting of all the mayors and reeves within the riding who, in turn, would plan the next nominating convention.[121]

The choice of the candidate is one of the most important functions of a political party: that responsibility was to be shared with the general citizenry in 1917. For example, the Great War Veterans' Association, which had previously refused to endorse Roderick

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120. _Ibid._, October 24, 1917

121. _Ibid._, November 3, 1917

McKenzie, the joint Labor-Grain Growers candidate,[122] or to participate in the first "Win the War" nominating convention on October 23, 1917,[123] played a rather substantial role in the second convention. When the name of Dr. Whidden, the president of Brandon College, was suggested as a compromise candidate, the Grain Growers had immediately endorsed that proposal and they had subsequently urged Mayor Cater to convene a second, "genuine" non-partisan nominating convention. Perhaps as a result of this clearly expressed political interest, fully one-half of all the delegates elected to the second nominating convention, which was held on November 16, were veterans, many of whom were members of the Great War Veterans' Association.[124] By November 1917, the veterans had become an important part of the body politic in Brandon.

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122. The Grain Growers had invited F.J. Dixon, a Winnipeg M.L.A. and an opponent of conscription, to speak at one of their meetings. Dixon, on the occasion, had stated that he would go to jail before he would complete the national registration form. Ibid., January 12, 1917. Furthermore,

> "...was not McKenzie a member of the Resolution Committee at the infamous Liberal Convention when the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier was endorsed?.... Are not the principal supporters of Rod McKenzie found in the ranks of anti-conscriptionists in the city today and notably among that section of slackers in the Trades and Labor Council who passed a resolution opposing Conscription?"

Ibid., November 7, 1917

123. The Great War Veterans' Association had refused to participate in the first "Win the War" convention on October 23, 1917, after they had been informed that they must select three Liberal and three Conservative delegates in order to be represented.

124. Brandon Daily Sun, November 13, 1917

The women of Brandon also earned for themselves a more prominent role in the city's political life as events progressed in 1917. After their rather weak showing at the October convention, to which only a handful of female delegates had been elected, the women met separately to prepare for the second convention. While only those "ladies (over 21 yearsof age) whose husbands, sons or brothers have enlisted for overseas service"[125] were declared to be eligible to participate at either the poll meetings or the November 16 convention, the Sun subsequently reported that they had secured "good representation."[126] However, "good" was not defined.

Meanwhile, the pressure in favour of a single "Win the War" candidate became so great that Roderick McKenzie, who had been nominated since August, felt compelled to stand again as only one of several candidates at that November 16 nominating convention. McKenzie, who accepted conscription (although he sought the conscription of wealth as well), was opposed at that convention by five other men: however, the contest was clearly between McKenzie and Dr. H.P. Whidden.[127] After the first ballot, Whidden led by a vote of 115 to 72, and he gained sufficient strength by the third ballot to secure the prescribed 60% of the total votes cast.[128] A compromise "Win the War" candidate had been selected, albeit with great difficulty.

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125. Ibid., November 10, 1917

126. Ibid., November 13, 1917

127. Dr. Whidden's name had been proposed at the earlier October 23 meeting as a possible compromise candidate. After that meeting, voters in the Souris area began to circulate a petition in support of his candidature and the Great War Veterans' Association, as noted, provided public support as well.

128. Brandon Daily Sun, November 17, 1917

The choice of the non-partisan and academic Whidden did not, by any means, satisfy the entire Brandon community. For example, "labour" subsequently considered nominating their own candidate in 1917. They had supported Rev. A.E. Smith in his unsuccessful bid for the Farmer-Labor nomination only to see McKenzie, the successful nominee, "shunted aside" by Dr. Whidden. Both S.C. Doran, an ex-Conservative, and A.E. Hill, a Liberal of sorts, argued in favour of a separate labour candidate at an especially convened Trades and Labor Council meeting. The meeting was told that the Laurier Liberals would not nominate in Brandon, if an anti-conscriptionist "Laborite" entered the contest. Consequently, the name of one Bisson was actually placed before the meeting.[129] However, Bisson decided not to stand and only H.S. Paterson, a Laurier Liberal, opposed Dr. Whidden.

Dr. Whidden's campaign was supervised by those same mayors and reeves who had planned the nominating convention which had selected him. They were, in addition, well supported by prominent party people: for example, the Minister of the Interior, the Hon. Arthur Meighen, and Premier T.C. Norris spoke on Whidden's behalf before an estimated audience of 1,300 people. In fact, every member of the Norris cabinet "threw himself heartily into the fight on our side,"[130] according to Manitoba's ex-Premier, Hugh John Macdonald.

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[129] Ibid., November 19, 1917

[130] PAC, Robert Borden Papers, vol. 228, 127541, Hugh John Macdonald to Borden, December 18, 1917. Laurier's visit to Manitoba and to Brandon must have been very painful under the circumstances.

Women, of course, were voting in their first federal election in 1917.[131] As a result, they were subjected to a very emotional election appeal: for example, the Sun, having noted that a Labor candidate might enter the contest, warned the women of Brandon that their responsibilities were immense.

> It is for the women of Brandon to say whether Socialists shall do for Canada what the Maximillist rebels and traitors have done for Russia. Shall we desert our soldier boys at the Front and leave them to the mercy of the unspeakable Hun....[132]

Later, on the eve of the election, female electors were told, in a front page advertisement, that this election was "the Day of Your Trial" and that "History" would judge Canadian women by their response: "To Your Glory, To Your Shame, Which shall it be? Treason or Victory."[133]

The election in Brandon was simply "no contest" as Dr. Whidden--with a margin of 9,340 civilian votes to 1,237 and a military vote of 2,125 to 92--won the most one sided victory ever recorded in the history of the riding. The Sun had earlier noted that the "partizans" claimed that there were several election issues; such as "the Canadian Northern Railway, the Food Controller, the Big Interests, Reciprocity, the Ross Rifle and other things."[134] However, the Sun had concluded:

> We have not time to settle them just now. The only thing that matters now is winning-the-war. Vote for Dr. Whidden and you vote right.[135]

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[131] Women voters, in addition to having played an active part in the second nominating convention, established their own poll organization on Whidden's behalf. Brandon Daily Sun, December 4, 1917

[132] Ibid., November 12, 1917

[133] Ibid., December 6, 1917

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

Whether Brandon voters had voted "right" is a matter of judgement, but it is certainly evident that the local electors agreed with the Sun's assertions that "Winning the War" was all important. It was, apparently, the only real issue in that 1917 wartime election.

On the one hand, the fact that Canada was at war had proved to be a unifying force. The conscription crisis and the 1917 election had forced Liberals and Conservatives into an unusual alliance and the desire to avoid any unnecessary division may have been a factor in Mayor Cater's re-election by acclamation on two occasions--1915 and 1917--during those "War Years." Yet, "labour" was clearly emerging as a separate community--with both economic and political interests. The division within the Brandon community was considerably more pronounced in 1918, perhaps due to the fact that the community began to focus more on local problems (such as the Spanish flu epidemic) as the War drew to a close. For example, labour unrest produced several strikes that year and, in one instance, local postal employees stubbornly remained on strike one additional day after a nation wide postal workers strike had ended. The fact that Brandon businessmen immediately urged Ottawa to hire replacement staff and, if necessary, to use the military to maintain service suggests that the seeds for future "class" conflict were well planted in Brandon by 1918. This was also evident by the manner in which Brandon aldermen responded to a proposal by Alderman Grantham, a well known "labourite," to protect all ratepayers from the sale of their property due to non-payment of taxes. While military personnel had been so protected since 1914, Grantham's proposal was rejected as a "Bolsheviki ideal."[136] Brandon politics must hereafter be viewed within the world context!

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[136] Ibid., September 17, 1918

While a growing "class" consciousness may have contributed to the city's divisiveness in 1918, Mayor Cater's own leadership (and perhaps his personality) seems to have been a significant factor in itself. Confrontations between mayor and council, which had been noted as early as 1916, became more frequent in 1918. The issues at stake were usually minor,[137] but the resultant impasse, in the opinion of the Sun (a Cater supporter until 1918), could hinder the future growth of the city.[138] While this conflict between mayor and council and the fact that Cater was seeking an unprecedented fifth term[139] appeared to be central issues in the 1918 mayoralty campaign, the fact that Cater, the now self-styled champion of the "people", was opposed by A.R. McDiarmid, the president of the Board of Trade, certainly suggests that the two mayoralty candidates personified the separate communities of business and labour. The mayoralty election results themselves reinforces the suggestion of increased division or regionalization as Harry Cater won the working

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137. For example, council had agreed to expend $100 to construct a public washroom in the city after a delegation of local women had petitioned council to that effect. Cater, however, vetoed the decision and several aldermen, in turn, refused to attend the next meeting—in protest.

138. Brandon Daily Sun, April 16, 1918

139. The Sun, on the eve of the election, published a notice purported to be from one "Khater" which stated as follows:

> "ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
>
> Notice is hereby given, that I reserve to myself all rights and privileges of homestead and pre-emption, including squatters rights to the position of mayor of the City of Brandon, in the Province of Manitoba, Dominion of Canada. Let all and sundry govern themselves accordingly.
>
> KHATER"

Ibid., November 22, 1918

class east ward by a resounding vote of 205 to 78, only to lose the other 4 wards and the election (by a vote of 755 to 961) to McDiarmid.[140]

Actually, "labour" candidates in general did not do very well in Brandon in 1918, despite the deteriorating economic conditions and the fact that there were more "labour" candidates than ever before. Admittedly, only Robert Crawford--a railway conductor and an ex-Conservative--was a so-called "official Labor Candidate"[141]--the first in the history of Brandon. Two "labour" candidates were really Socialists: George S. Morris, a C.P.R. dispatcher, had stood unsuccessfully as a Socialist in the past; and Alderman J.A. Grantham, a real estate agent and "one of the strongest Socialists in the city,"[142] had served on council as a friend of labour for some time. Alderman Bulloch, a contractor, had also served on council as a "friend" of labour. Of the four, only Alderman Grantham was elected and his victory came in ward one--the one ward that had voted for Cater and the only ward that had denied a tax exemption to A.E. McKenzie in 1918.[143] Brandon was, decidely, somewhat "regionalized" by 1918.

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[140] Ibid. The local vote was lower than usual as only 1,716 voters went to the polls. This was probably due to two factors: Brandon's population was at a low ebb in 1918 and the flu epidemic, "which had led to the cancellation of all public meetings," probably kept many voters at home. Ibid., November 22, 1918

[141] Ibid.

[142] Ibid. The Sun opposed Grantham with the rather clever argument that a "railwayman, or someone thoroughly versed with the needs of the working class," should run in ward one "largely composed as it is of railwaymen...." Ibid., November 16, 1918

Municipal politics, from 1912 to 1918 inclusive, had been greatly affected by the economic conditions of the day, by the War (especially in the manner in which it affected the local economy), and by the growing "class" consciousness that was a significant development of this era. Economic factors were not as significant at either the provincial or federal level. Instead, "reform" and, later, "corruption" appeared to be the predominant issues in the two provincial elections--although it is vitally important to remember that Brandon electors voted "ministerialist" in both instances. The War--and the urgent need for an all-out nation wide effort to win that War--predominated over all other concerns in the federal election of 1917 at which time many Liberals had joined with the Conservatives to further that goal. It was an era in which voting patterns had been altered significantly--although this may not be so surprising when one considers the fact that the city's population had been reduced significantly during those war years, from 17,177 to 14,012;[144] that many residents had left to join the war effort; and that women, in large numbers, had been added to the electoral lists. The significance, it would appear, was that these shifts were occurring; that new political forces such as the farmers and labour were emerging; and that the War was now over. Those many problems which had been previously "set aside" would now have to be considered. Party politicians would have to provide the answers or else the voters, who were becoming increasingly freed of past political loyalties, might well express themselves in new unknown ways. The era of the Great War was over. What type of political era would succeed it was, however, far from clear.

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[143] A.E. McKenzie, one of Brandon's most prominent businessmen, had proposed a $170,000 addition to his famous seed plant provided that this improvement be exempted from municipal taxation for twenty years. Although similar requests had been approved before, the electors of ward one rejected the proposal by a vote of 102 to 50, and, as a result, the measure failed to achieve the required 60% "yes" vote. Ibid., May 28, 1918

[144] Ibid., September 19, 1921

Chapter V

1919-22: The Turbulent Years

The post-war years were turbulent years, both economically and politically. This was true for most of Canada and it was certainly the case in Brandon. There were, for example, three "general" strikes in this small prairie city in 1919 and those who struck in sympathy with their Winnipeg brothers actually remained on strike even after the celebrated Winnipeg General Strike had ended. Brandonites also experienced the post-war recession and council, by 1921, was desperately seeking to pare costs wherever possible. 1921 was a bad year in the agricultural industry and Brandon,often called the "Wheat City," could hardly avoid being affected by a deteriorating rural economy. There were, also, the unresolved economic problems of previous years; for example, the recurring annual losses of the municipally owned street railway system was one of the principal reasons why the city was forced to raise taxes in 1921.[1]

These years were equally turbulent for Brandon politicians as they were years of rapid and sweeping changes. For example, A.E. Smith, the former Methodist minister, triumphed over two opponents, including the incumbent Liberal M.L.A., in "labour's" first bid for provincial office in 1920. Perhaps the crack in the traditional party system had occurred as early as 1917 when the supporters of the two "old line" parties had combined to nominate and elect a non-partisan Unionist candidate. In any event, the traditional party system was rent even further asunder in 1921 when a Progressive candidate rather easily defeated both his Conservative and "Liberal"[2] opponents in the federal election of that year. Finally, a coalition of Liberal and Conservative voters, in 1922, defeated A.E. Smith in his bid for re-election. Within a space of three years, "Labour", Progressive and "Fusionist" candidates had each tasted victory. Had Brandon voters cast aside all of their traditional political inclinations?

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[1] Brandon Daily Sun, November 16, 1927

Brandon, like most Western Canadian communities, was beset with a number of severe (and complex) problems in 1919--a year in which economics and politics were considerably interrelated. Those with jobs were demanding long awaited wage increases and the right to collective bargaining. There were, in addition, hundreds of demobilized (and unemployed) soldiers who constituted a readily available replacement labour force and at least one strike was broken that year when carpenters, who had struck a Coca-cola plant at 12th and Pacific, were easily replaced at lower wages.[3] The veterans, however, were themselves embittered to discover in 1919, once the noise of their "welcome home" celebrations had subsided, that "aliens" now filled many of the jobs which these young soldiers had vacated a few years before. Consequently, in Winnipeg, some companies, such as Swift's, were "pressured" into dismissing their "foreign" employees and there were frequent "clashes" between veterans and "foreigners." However, the Brandon Daily Sun contended that this regrettable violence was due to the influence of the much-feared Bolshevists and even Brandon, the newspaper warned, was not immune to this danger.

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[2] Admittedly F.C. Cox, the Liberal candidate, was the choice of only a small faction of the Liberal party in Manitoba.

[3] The Carpenters' Union sought a wage of seventy-five cents per hour while a plentiful supply of non-Union labor was available at sixty cents per hour. Brandon Daily Sun, April 7, 1919. The unemployed veterans were, thus, as much a threat to the unions as were the "foreigners" who would traditionally work for lower wages.

> If Brandon would avoid a repetition of the Sunday rioting in Winnipeg, it must be made impossible for Bolshevist agitators to publicly mouth their meally mess.... The right of free speech...is subject to certain reservations. The test should be loyalty. It should be loyalty of word and action.[4]

This same newspaper responded to a bakers' strike in mid-1919 in a similar manner when it claimed that "they [the bakers] did it to further the Revolution by which a few rascals sought to achieve by stealth that which Germany failed to win by force."[5] Thus, the post-war recession combined with the fear generated by the Russian Revolution, distant though it was, provided an emotional and volatile framework in which politics in Brandon in this post-war era would unfold.

The post-war labour unrest, the predominant issue in 1919, reached its climax, in Brandon, in the three general strikes that occurred in the first few months of that year. The causes were essentially two-fold as workers struck for higher wages and union recognition although many, in 1919, simply struck in sympathy with their fellow unionists. For example, Brandon's first general strike in 1919 resulted after the city had refused to recognise the Civic Employees' Union. Furthermore, civic authorities had dismissed the president and the secretary of this new union for "economic" reasons as the city attempted to "cut" expenditures in this post-war period. As a result, approximately one hundred civic employees, including clerks, firemen, street railwaymen, city policemen and labourers, struck on April 23, 1919.[6] About one hundred teamsters went out the following day. Brandon was faced with its first sympathy strike.

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[4] Ibid., January 28, 1919

[5] Ibid., May 16, 1919

Municipal politicians faced a major and unprecedented challenge. The sudden emergence of a strong and seemingly united labour class was a potentially powerful economic and political force with which local politicians had little or no previous experience. Issues of this nature could seriously divide communities and they could, as well, endanger political careers. Some civic politicians, such as Alderman Grantham--a longtime labour supporter, would consistently support the strikers. Others, such as Alderman George Dinsdale, would seemingly vacilate from one side to the other during those turbulent months.

George Dinsdale, who had been elected to council in 1918 at the unusually young age of thirty-one, was to become one of Brandon's most prominent politicians. This "political boy-wonder,"[7] as the Sun later described him, had been born in Yorkshire, England, in 1887. Leaving school at age thirteen, Dinsdale had worked as herdsman until emigrating to Ontario in 1904 where he found employment as a farm labourer. After a few months, he migrated to Western Canada; to Elbow, Saskatchewan; to Carberry; and, finally, to Brandon. After having worked as a carpenter, while he studied telegraphy at night school, Dinsdale--who was about twenty years old at the time--started his own local cartage firm. Simultaneously, the future politician worked actively as a Salvation Army lay worker--an experience which contributed to the popular imagery

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6. Ibid., April 24, 1919

7. Ibid., October 29, 1919

of this young man "whose life from youth up has been an open book."[8]

Dinsdale, whose political stock rose rapidly in this post-war era, appeared generally to be a "friend to labour" and he did support the Civic Employee's Union in this first "general" strike in 1919. Apparently so did many other Brandonites as council soon accepted the offer of the Board of Trade to mediate the differences between the strikers and the city. The result was a major victory for labour. The Civic Employee's Union was recognized; the two dismissed union leaders were re-instated; and a Board of Arbitration, as sought by the union, was established to resolve the issue of salaries.

As a result of their "victory," labour leaders and sympathizers, in a somewhat intoxicated mood, accepted the rather ambitious undertaking of organizing "all labor in the city, and to take in all classes outside those already in the union."[9] The Rev. James Savage, pastor at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church and one of several Brandon clergymen who supported the strikers, confidently proclaimed that "the recent strike had cemented labor forever in Brandon."[10]

However, Brandon's second general strike, which began in mid-May when local teamsters went out in sympathy with the infamous Winnipeg General Strike, was not to be resolved so easily. Brandon civic authorities and many of the city's "citizens at large" were not prepared to acquiesce to this second "sympathy" strike in as many months.[11] City council, for example, warned the members of the now recognized Civic Employee's Union that they would be replaced, if necessary[12]--a threat that was subsequently fulfilled. In addition, the pay increase, which had been part of the settlement with the Civic Employee's Union, was cancelled while strikers, who did return to their civic positions, found that they had lost their seniority.[13]

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., April 29, 1919

[10] Ibid.

Council's "tough" stand during the second strike was the cause of the city's third "general" strike as local labour leaders called the strike immediately after the Winnipeg General Strike had ended to protest the city's refusal to re-instate all strikers without penalty. While some firemen and coalhandlers at the pumping station did strike on June 27, as requested, the overall response was sporadic and short-lived. Some strikers were replaced easily while others, such as F.J. Baker, the local Strike Committee chairman, drifted back to their jobs even though the strike remained officially in progress![14]

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[11] Council's decisions, in this regard, were presumably endorsed by Brandon's "Law and Order League," a citizens group that was evidently a local counterpart to Winnipeg's "Committee of One Thousand." This citizen body had been organized to ensure that the city's public utilities could operate and "to assist if necessary in the preservation of law and order." Ibid., May 27, 1919. As this second sympathy strike was relatively peaceful in Brandon, and as only minor acts of violence and intimidations against non-strikers were reported (ibid., June 9, 1919), the role of the Law and Order League was primarily to work as volunteers at the city's pumping station. Shovelling coal for long hours may not have been what the members of the Law and Order League originally had in mind!

[12] Ibid., May 27, 1919

[13] Ibid., June 10, 1919

[14] Ibid., June 28, 1919

By July 1, the third "general" strike had been broken and the street railwaymen, who were the last to return, found that they had to negotiate their own re-instatement. The Civic Employee's Union, in the meantime, had reportedly severed all connections with the local Trades and Labor Council as well as having repudiated forever the right to participate in a sympathetic strike. Having done so, they returned to their former positions having lost their seniority and their previously won pay increases.[15] Labour in Brandon had suffered greatly as a result of these last two "general" strikes and, certainly, that united front which Reverend James Savage had enthusiastically proclaimed after the Civic Employee's Union strike had been broken.

Those troubled weeks in May and June 1919 had been politically significant for those civic leaders who had been forced to take public positions on very controversial issues. Alderman Grantham's support for labour continued unswervingly throughout but Alderman George Dinsdale, who would become a mayoralty candidate later that year, appeared to become less decisive. While he had supported the Civic Employee's Union during the April strike and although he opposed council's decision to nullify the previously agreed to salary increases, he offered little other support to strikers during the May-June sympathy strike. In fact, he was absent from several of the extraordinarily numerous council meetings which were held during the strike, a fact which led Mayor McDiarmid to complain "that he could see no reason why he [Dinsdale] shouldn't attend the same as other

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15. Ibid., July 2, 1919. Only two civic employees refused to sign the prescribed agreement repudiating sympathetic strikes.

members of council."[16] Whether Alderman Dinsdale's apparent indecision was, in any way, related to the up-coming mayoralty elections can only be a matter for conjecture.

Labour had "lost" the last two general strikes. They, in addition, did rather badly in the 1919 municipal elections.[17] Of the three "labour" aldermanic candidates, railway employee F.E. Carey was the sole victor winning election in ward three. Both of the Trades and Labor Council candidates, Walter Stone and Charles Durrant, were defeated.[18] Moreover, the fact that Durrant lost in ward one to Alderman George Coleman, a lawyer and a well known Conservative, while labour's old friend Harry Cater outpolled Dinsdale in that same ward suggests that labour was not yet able to speak in a single unified voice even in that east end working class ward. Therefore, despite the general strikes of 1919, labour's consciousness and solidarity was insufficient to guarantee support for "class" or "party" candidates, irrespective of the individual qualities of the candidates. "Party" voting, at the municipal level, had not yet become a potent force by 1919.

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[16] Ibid., June 11, 1919. While the significance of Dinsdale's absence is not certain, it is interesting to note that the strikers permitted Dinsdale's cartage firm to continue to deliver mail during the May-June sympathy strike. Ibid., May 26, 1919

[17] One of the factors which may have contributed to "labour's" disappointing results was the more conciliatory attitude adopted by council. For example, Police Chief Esslemont (who had remained at his post during the strikes) was dismissed in August for "reorganizational" purposes: he, however, claimed that his principal critics had been the "ringleaders in the strike." Ibid., September 5, 1919. This act by council, as well as its late November decision to restore the seniority of all civic employees who had voluntarily returned to work (ibid., November 25, 1919), may well have been designed to divide the united "labour" front prior to those elections.

[18] Ibid., November 29, 1919

Nevertheless, mayoralty candidate George Dinsdale obviously considered labour support to be politically significant as he took pains to advertise himself as a "labour man" and as a supporter of the Civic Employee's Union strike.[19] Other labour spokesmen, however, denied that Dinsdale had any claim to labour's support: in fact, railway employee Robert Crawford, a former alderman and a former Conservative, campaigned against Dinsdale charging that he was really the candidate of "the Board of Trade and the Brandon Sun."[20] A.E. Smith, the once popular Methodist minister who had severed connections with his church as a result of the 1919 strikes, also campaigned actively against George Dinsdale in the 1919 mayoralty election. Consequently, Dinsdale lost the working class ward one by a vote of 245 to 106.[21]

However, George Dinsdale was still elected mayor in 1919 by a vote of 1068 to 995 due to the support of the business community and, probably, the Brandon Sun. The centre area wards, which were generally regarded as the businessmen's sector, gave the young cartage firm owner a 212 vote margin and his narrow victory.[22] The Sun, which had unabashedly supported Dinsdale throughout the campaign, may well have been a contributing factor as Dinsdale's opponent was painted in such reprehensible terms that even the most ardent Harry Cater supporters might have had second doubts! For example, newspaper readers were reminded:

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[19] Ibid., November 29, 1919

[20] Ibid., November 27, 1919

[21] Ibid., November 29, 1919

[22] Ibid.

> ...during the regime of Cater as Mayor this city seethed with discontent. Civic staffs and workmen were treated without consideration.... In the Council chamber...his Czar-like methods roused the greatest resentment and dissatisfaction.[23]

While Cater's interests in civic economy or his "cheese-paring tendencies"[24] admittedly had been helpful in the past, he was "unfit for leadership in a period of expansion and development."[25] Governments, it has been said, lose elections--opposition parties do not win. Perhaps, ex-Mayor Cater lost in 1919 due to his previous administrative record: consequently George Dinsdale became the beneficiary. One suspects, however, that George Dinsdale's unwillingness to support labour fully during the 1919 general strikes had also enabled him to win those business votes more easily. In that case, the 1919 general strikes were politically significant, even at the municipal level.

While "labour" failed to benefit politically as a result of the labour strife of 1919, the provincial election of 1920 provided an opportunity which the local labour community would capitalize upon by electing Brandon's first "labour" member, A.E. Smith. Smith, who was born to poverty-stricken working-class parents in Ontario in 1871 and who, at age thirteen, had worked in a Hamilton machine shop, began a career as a Methodist probationer at McGregor, Manitoba, in 1890. Later, as an ordained Methodist minister, he served in several prairie ministeries: Prince Albert, N.W.T.; MacDougal Memorial Methodist Church in Winnipeg, where he gained his first political experience

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23. Ibid., November 22, 1919

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

by campaigning for A.W. Puttee; Portage La Prairie where he campaigned for temperance; Nelson B.C. where his public support of a Socialist candidate caused difficulties with his local church board; and, finally, Brandon in 1913. Despite the fact that Smith believed his religious philosophy to be "quite unorthodox" during those years,[26] this forty-one year old minister was warmly received in Brandon. In fact, his First Methodist congregation successfully petitioned the Manitoba Methodist Conference to permit him to remain in Brandon beyond the normal four year term.[27] As a result of his popularity and his support of Canada's war effort, Smith was one of several candidates considered by the "Win the War" nominating convention in 1917. An ardent conscriptionist, he played a significant role in Dr. Whidden's election campaign although the Methodist minister was equally determined that a new social order should be created in post-war Canada. In fact, he was an integral part of an attempt by the Social Gospel wing of the Methodist Church, led by Salem Bland, to persuade the 1918 Methodist Conference, held in Hamilton, to support a re-construction policy which was "further to the left than that of any party of consequence before the emergence of the CCF in 1933."[28] By 1918, Smith and many other Methodist reformers were conceding that their new social order could not be achieved in a capitalistic society and the popular Methodist minister joined the local Labor party immediately upon his return from the 1918 Hamilton Conference. That decision particularly displeased Stephen E. Clement, the Liberal M.P.P. and a prominent member of his congregation.

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[26] A.E. Smith, All My Life (Toronto 1949), 42

[27] Brandon Daily Sun, June 17, 1917. That decision, when it was announced was greeted by the Brandon Sun with an eye-catching headline "BRANDON GLAD TO RETAIN A.E. SMITH: A GOOD CITIZEN" Ibid., June 18, 1917

[28] Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform In Canada 1914-28 (Toronto 1971), 74

While Smith's interest in Socialism and his open support of the Labor party were disturbing to many of his parishioners, his public participation in the 1919 strikes was the specific cause of his dismissal. Smith, who was the Ministerial Association representative to the Brandon Trades and Labor Council, spoke at several strike meetings, both in Brandon and Winnipeg; he helped prepare Strike bulletins; and he led street parades. He was, in his own words, "in the thick of the battle."[29] As a result, Smith's local church board attempted to prevent him from preaching further sermons before that congregation. Although the motion was rejected on technical grounds, Smith was still essentially faced with an ultimatum--to choose between the church and the strikers.

Smith subsequently established the "People's Church," whose membership was open to all who believed in the need for and were prepared to work towards a "BETTER DAY for human society,"[30] at 319, 10th Street, Brandon.[31] In addition, Smith worked closely with the members of the general community in their places of employment and in their homes--particularly with those immigrants who resided north of the tracks in "the Flats." Without doubt, Smith's activities

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29. Smith, All My Life, 48

30. Canadian Tribunal, March 3, 1945. As quoted in the unpublished essay of E. Pirie, "Rev. A.E. Smith", 51

31. The church was the scene of constant activity as Miss Beatrice Brigden, then a young parishioner and later an active labour leader in Brandon and Winnipeg, noted that she attended as many as thirteen "church related functions" in one week. Ibid.

in 1919, both on behalf of the strikers and in the interests of the People's Church, laid the foundation for what proved to be a successful political campaign as a "labour" candidate in the 1920 provincial election.

The Dominion Labor Party, which Smith had joined in 1918 and on whose behalf he would stand in 1920, had attempted in 1919 to establish a common front with the growing "farmers' movement" in the Brandon area. A committee of twenty-four, representing the Trades and Labor Council, the Dominion Labor Party membership in both Brandon and Souris, and the Brandon branch of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association had been charged with the responsibility of formulating a joint educational and political programme.[32] According to what appears to have been a Royal North West Mounted Police intelligence report, the Rev. Mr. Salter, a Methodist and formerly the assistant to Rev. A.E. Smith at First Methodist, Brandon, was the key intermediary link in this attempt

> ...to arrive at a platform agreeable to both.... The reason that Brandon had been selected for this is that it is thought that it will be the best spot where country and city can get together.... The idea is that it is felt that this body can arrive at some basis that will be satisfactory to the two bodies throughout the province for Joint action.[33]

The election of Smith to the Board of Directors of the Brandon branch of the United Farmers of Manitoba probably had been intended to further this proposed union between the labour and farmer movements. However, some farmers had protested so vehemently against this "introduction of

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32. Brandon Daily Sun, May 16, 1919

33. It is interesting to note that this committee had made some progress by late 1919. Thus, the Rev. Mr. Salter is reported to have stated that "labour" was willing to accept the Grain Growers' platform "provided that they will give them sufficient guarantee that they will carry out in full their plank of proportional representation...." PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 2, file 13, 001020, [?] to Meighen, December 23, 1919

politics" into the U.F.M. that Smith had felt compelled to resign.[34] Finally, the decision of this very urban branch of the U.F.M. to bypass the 1920 provincial election, in favour of the upcoming federal election,[35] nullified all hopes of a joint farmer- labour candidate for Brandon in 1920. The Dominion Labor Party would have to stand alone.

The Dominion Labor Party itself was divided into a moderate and a radical wing. A.E. Smith, who was considered to be more moderate than the One Big Union candidates[36] who had been the principal leaders in the 1919 strikes, narrowly led a field of ten nominees on the first ballot.[37] On the second (and final) ballot, R. Bartholomew, a local strike leader and the O.B.U. candidate, fell from fourteen to thirteen votes; R.T. Smith's[38] vote advanced from fourteen to thirty-two; while A.E. Smith's total increased from twenty-three to fifty-two. The

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[34] Brandon Daily Sun, January 21, 1920. Others certainly suspected that there was "politics" in the farmers movement: for example, T.A. Crerar, the national leader of the Progressives, believed that Bob Rogers had succeeded in getting a number of Conservatives nominated as "farmers." Queens University Archives (QUA), T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 70, Crerar to George Chapman, June 16, 1920. On the other hand, Prime Minister Meighen believed that "the supposed new independent movement was nothing more or less than the old Liberal party in a new guise...." PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 5, file 30, 002612, Meighen to C.A. Curtis, July 6, 1920

[35] Brandon Daily Sun, April 5, 1920

[36] Richard Allen, however, suggests that Smith's political philosophy "may already have been more radical than Ivens." Allen, The Social Gospel, 92

[37] The first ballot results were as follows: A.E. Smith, 23; W. Hill, 17; R.T. Smith, 14; H. Bartholomew, 14; W. Webb, 9; A.E. Skeene, 7; H. Cater, 5; Alderman F.E. Carey, 4; Alderman J.S. Grantham, 3; and R. Crawford, 1. Brandon Daily Sun, April 28, 1920

[38] R.T. Smith was a conductor with the C.P.R. Henderson's Directory (1919) Brandon

"moderates" had carried the day.[39]

The incumbent in 1920 was Stephen E. Clement, a prominent Brandonite who had been elected in 1915. However, Clement's performance as a M.L.A. had been disappointing to his critics[40] (and perhaps even to his friends). Despite the fact that many Brandonites believed that their constituency automatically deserved representation in the cabinet, Clement had not been invited into that vital "inner circle." This failure was so damaging, in the eyes of some, that Brigadier General James Kirkcaldy, the local Independent nominee,[41] offered to stand aside in favour of a local Liberal of cabinet stature--if Clement would do the same.[42] Clement, the incumbent, understandably declined and a three-way contest was guaranteed. This, as many Liberals and Conservatives feared, was the ideal opportunity for "labour."

Although Kirkcaldy was extremely critical of Clement's personal failures, of "...the misrepresentation of the City of Brandon,"[43] his supporters contended that the "election of General Kirkcaldy need not be construed as a vote against the Norris government."[44] Thus, Kirkcaldy obviously assumed that Clement personally was politically more vulnerable than the faltering Norris administration. His main attack, however, was reserved for A.E. Smith in that 1920 election.

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[39] Smith, who was in Calgary organizing another People's Church at the time of the nominating convention, agreed to stand despite the fact that he did not expect to win. Smith, All My Life, 63

[40] The Conservatives frequently complained that Clement's only contribution in his five years was the Dower Act and even that piece of legislation had required amendment within a year to ensure its effectiveness.

[41] Although Conservative candidates, after the 1915 parliamentary building scandal, preferred to be known as Independent Conservatives, Kirkcaldy--a former alderman, ex-Chief of Police, ex-City Assessor, and Brandon's most celebrated war hero--campaigned as an Independent in 1920. He would vote only "as his judgement dictated." Brandon Daily Sun, May 8, 1920. Thus, he promised that he would, on occasions, even support the Norris government.

[42] Ibid., June 22, 1920

[43] Ibid., June 21, 1920

Kirkcaldy's campaign (which the pro-Conservative Sun most fully publicized), it should be noted, was directed more personally at Smith, the "Red", than it was at the labour movement itself. For example, while the Sun conceded that "Labor has every right to be represented"[45] in the Manitoba legislature, it editorially contended that "there is no bona fide Labor candidate before the Brandon electors."[46] There were, instead,

> ...forces of destruction, masquerading as Labor, [who] are organized and maneuvering for strategic position.
> In a convention called in the name of Labor, the Reds secured control, and foisted their candidate onto Labor....[47]

The Sun, in addition, repeatedly used the word "revolution" in conjunction with Smith's candidature and it was claimed that Smith, himself, had frequently spoken of revolution during the 1919 strikes. Although Smith described this accusation as a "base and infamous lie,"[48] one suspects that most electors would remember the accusation more clearly than they would the denial. That is part of the political process.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., June 21, 1920

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., June 25, 1920

One of the unique features of the 1920 provincial election was the participation of several clergymen, many of whom were opposing their former colleague. Rev. Lowry of Knox, for example, preached an election eve sermon which proved to be a patriotic eulogy of the British flag and a warning about "a godless tyranny masquerading under the name of freedom."[49] The most sensational announcement, however, was that of the Rev. James Savage, the pastor of St. Andrew's and a friend to labour in the past, who claimed that he had been forced to resign his position as

> ...the members of his congregation who are supporters of Mr. Smith have made his position intolerable by stating that they would withdraw their church support.[50]

Rev. Savage, now released from the restraints of his position, campaigned strenuously against his fellow cleric on several grounds, including the fact that Smith's religious teachings were "anti-Christian and pagan."[51] It was, indeed, a bitter campaign.

While there were lesser issues in 1920 such as the need for more development of natural resources, the perennial question of taxes, and the lack of assistance available to returned soldiers, the primary question was whether or not the voters of Brandon would risk supporting A.E. Smith and the Dominion Labor Party and whether a three way contest might enable him to win with only a minority of the total votes that were cast. A.E. Smith, when the ballots were counted, received only 2007 votes out of a total 4655. Nevertheless, he had won election as Brandon's first "Labour" M.L.A. due to the fact that the incumbent

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[49] Ibid., June 28, 1920

[50] Manitoba Free Press, June 26, 1920

[51] Brandon Daily Sun, June 26, 1920

Clement (with 1403 votes) and Kirkcaldy (with 1245 votes) had divided the majority vote between them.[52] However, although Smith's greatest majorities were, as one would expect, in the east end and on the north side, the so-called working class districts, the Dominion Labor Party candidate had clearly drawn support from beyond traditional "labour" circles. Thus, "labour's" first political victory in Brandon must also, to some degree, be viewed as a personal triumph for A.E. Smith.[53]

Whether labour had gained significantly as a political movement was a question that would partly be resolved by the 1920 civic elections. Those 2000 voters who had supported A.E. Smith would presumably vote for labour candidates later that same year if, in fact, their support of Smith actually constituted a vote for labour per se. However, there was nothing to indicate that such was the case. The Dominion Labor Party did present a platform[54] and it did endorse three aldermanic candidates (and two school board candidates) in 1920. However, in ward two, J.H. Skene, the Dominion Labor Party's candidate, was defeated 328 to 109 by R. Crawford, a railway employee whom the Dominion Labor Party had refused to endorse, while A. Zylicz, "a store-keeper on the Flats,"[55] did rather poorly in ward three. As Grantham had served on council for a number of years, his re-election must be viewed more as a personal victory than as evidence of Dominion Labor Party support. It would appear as if there was, in fact, little Labour "party" support, even after the strikes of 1919 and, secondly, what support there was was not easily transferable from one level of politics to another. Smith's victory in 1920 had not, in any evident manner, affected Brandon politics at the municipal level.[56]

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[52] Ibid., July 6, 1920. The election day totals differed slightly from these official figures, but the relative position of the candidates remained the same. An interesting comment on the 1920 election result was provided by several observers who noted there were fewer female voters registered for the 1920 provincial election than there had been for the 1917 federal election. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, June 28, 1920. Undoubtedly, the emotionalism of the conscription issue in 1917 had encouraged a massive registration at that time.

[53] One of the notable features of the 1920 provincial election in Brandon was the seemingly total absence of federal political involvement. The Norris Liberals had deliberately disassociated themselves from their federal counterparts while the federal Conservatives, who were attempting to maintain the facade of the Unionist government, of necessity remained aloof:

> "I told them [the provincial Conservatives] further that while I continued a member of the Union Government federally, I could not take part in such local organization, nor did I believe that any of my colleagues in the Union Government would take any part.... So far as I could see at present it looks as if there will be a complete divorcement of provincial and federal politics...."

PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 5, file 30, 002525, Meighen to J.J. Garland, March 3, 1919

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[54] The proposals themselves were not particularly startling. "Labour" candidates proposed a free public library, supervised playgrounds, abolition of the ward system, proportional representation, eight hour day, and the municipal ownership of the light and power system. Brandon Daily Sun, November 17, 1920

[55] Ibid. Zylicz did have the distinction of being one of the first non-WASP candidates in Brandon, however.

[56] "Labour" could claim credit in 1920 for the abolition of the ward system of representation as Aldermen Grantham and Carey had initiated this campaign which culminated in a 512 to 321 vote in favour of the proposal. The arguments in favour of the abolition of the ward system were that the inequality of plural voting would be abolished; there would be a larger field from which to secure able candidates; and that voters would hopefully take a greater interest in municipal politics when they had a chance to elect the entire council. "Labourites" probably assumed, as well, that they would be able to do better than they could at that moment when they had a good chance in only one or two wards. Ironically, it was "labour" which subsequently advocated the restoration of the ward system in 1971!

While most of the public's interest was naturally directed towards provincial politics in 1920, the politicians themselves were already looking ahead to the next federal election which was "due" in 1921. Manitoba Liberals, whose party had been badly "split" in 1917, faced many obstacles. There was, in the words of the Liberal's chief organizer, "no organization here."[57] The rapid growth of the farmers' movement also presented a major dilemma for the Liberals. While both Premier Norris, who was attempting to continue in office with the support of the U.F.M. M.L.A.'s, and Mackenzie King believed that the federal Liberal party should "cooperate" with the farmers, J.A. Knott[58] headed a faction which had supported Laurier in 1917 and who were now eager "to take on all comers"--the farmers included--in the post-war era.[59] However, while party officials fought "strategy wars" with each other, A.E. Hill, a former Griswold merchant and the local Liberal candidate in the 1911 federal election, reported that his former constituents had already decided the issue for themselves.

> All...declare that they see nothing but the farmers in the next Federal election, but... they would do their best to see that a man who had not been an old time Conservative receive the nomination. Most of them had

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[57] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 74, 46761-62, A. Haydon to National Liberal Committee, May 12, 1920

[58] Knott was the vice-president of the Manitoba Liberal Association.

[59] Haydon, the federal organizer and a powerful voice within the Liberal party, had no patience whatsoever for the Knott faction.

> "The sooner the Liberal party says good-bye to him [Knott] the better. The loss of a handful of reactionaries is as nothing compared with the gaining of hundreds...."

PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 61, 52944, A. Haydon to [?], March 4, 1921

> already subscribed to the Farmers Election Fund....[60]

The Conservatives, too, had their share of political difficulties by 1920. Arthur Meighen, the party's new leader as of July 1920, was anxious to retain the support of the Liberal Unionists: however, his old enemy Robert Rogers was totally opposed to such a policy. In fact, J.W. Dafoe, probably the best informed political observer in Manitoba, reported: "In private conversation--so I am told--Rogers makes no bones of his determination to get Meighen...."[61] Dr. Whidden, Brandon's Unionist M.P.,[62] was also concerned with the potential difficulties of continuing the coalition at the constituency level:

> It is going to be a little difficult to effect organization in a perfectly harmonious way at an early date but I believe it will come out all right. Some of our staunch old friends of the former Conservative party will be inclined to doubt the sincerity of many of these men just referred to, i.e. Liberals but we must try to meet that part of the situation.[63]

While the divided and ill-prepared "old-line" parties looked uncertainly toward the future election, the "farmers" were seemingly better prepared. Although they too had experienced some

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60. Ibid., vol. 62, 53239-40, A.E. Hill to A. Haydon, January 17, 1921

61. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 208,602823, Dafoe to Sifton, January 26, 1921

62. The fact that Dr. Whidden held the seat for the government may not have been overly significant as he had not been a particularly active member and he seems, even near the end of his term, to have lacked the political expertise normally expected of a sitting member. For example, he frequently sought the Prime Minister's assistance on seemingly minor issues and one wonders about the political sensitivity of a M.P. who found it necessary to enquire of the Prime Minister as to whether constituency meetings should be held during the summer recess. PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 34, file 125, 019723, H.P. Whidden to Meighen, July 19, 1920

63. Ibid., vol. 56, file 237, 031720, H.P. Whidden to Meighen, November 25, 1920

division,[64] they did succeed in presenting a united front and A.E. Hill was one veteran politician who was impressed.

> My impression is that the Farmers movement is strong and not likely to be broken up in the near future. It is on a different basis than the old Patrons of Industry, and its Commercial success in the Grain business provides it with the necessary cash to finance its paper the 'Guide'. The constant cry is made by them that they are not a class organization and they make a plea for the support of the age [wage?] earners and brain [?] workers of the towns and cities. I...understand that about $6,000.00 was collected in Brandon riding....[65]

As events proved, they were also in 1921 to select the ideal candidate.[66]

Robert Forke, who won the local nomination over three other contenders, was an excellent choice considering the political circumstances of that election. Forke, a sixty-one year old Pipestone area farmer, had been active in the Manitoba Grain Growers since its inception; he had been a part of the old Patrons of Industry;[67] he had a distinguished record as a local community leader;[68] and, finally, he had been a well known Liberal. As T.A. Crerar rather playfully explained to a good friend, Forke was the "candidate who could never be excelled in that constituency--a native of Scotland, a Liberal and a fine outstanding man of integrity such as you would naturally associate with that combination."[69] In any event, Robert Forke was the type of "farmer" candidate whom long-time Liberals could most easily support in 1921.

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[64] Dafoe had reported earlier on a conflict between the extremists and the moderates that was raging within their ranks. The extremists, those "men inflamed with class feeling," were reported to have lost in early 1920. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 207, 162562-65, Dafoe to Sifton, January 17, 1921

[65] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 62, 53239-40, A.E. Hill to A. Haydon, January 17, 1921

[66] Actually, local Liberals may have played a significant role in the decision of the farmers to nominate Robert Forke. According to a local newspaper report, Brandon area Liberals threatened to nominate their own candidate if the farmers failed to chose Forke. Brandon Daily Sun, October 6, 1921

[67] Forke's previous association with the Patrons of Industry may well have been the only "black mark" associated with his candidature. He reportedly had disappointed many farmers when he, after losing the Patrons of Industry nomination in 1908, had failed to campaign in support of the successful nominee. PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 188, 151155, Dafoe to Sifton, January 17, 1909

[68] Forke had served as reeve of the Pipestone municipality for twenty years and as secretary-treasurer of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities for eleven years.

Nevertheless, F.C. Cox, a printer and the president of the Brandon Trades and Labor Council, was still nominated in 1921 as a "Liberal" candidate, admittedly under rather unusual circumstances. The Dominion Labor Party, at a convention attended by forty-four delegates, had been unable to agree upon a candidate: consequently, they had decided not to contest that election.[70] Consequently, the "Knott" faction of the Manitoba Liberal party undoubtedly hoped that the nomination of F.C. Cox as "their" candidate would appeal to those vital "labour" votes. However, Cox received only 250 votes in Brandon itself, while most "labour" candidates, even in municipal elections, polled 1,000-1,600 votes on an average. Furthermore, Cox did not receive any assistance from the Ottawa Liberals even after Mackenzie King's belated decision to fight the Progressives on all fronts. There was, as H.S. Paterson complained, "little or no support from the leader of the party, I cannot account for this, excepting that Mr. King...must have been grossly misinformed of the condition here."[71] While part of Cox's weakness in 1921 may be explained in "personal" terms as A.E. Hill alluded to "some features about the Knott candidate in Brandon... that makes his candidature particularly objectionable to the good citizens of Brandon City,"[72] what was most evident on election day was that this Knott candidate--probably for several reasons--did quite poorly at the polls.

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[69] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, October 6, 1921

[70] Although this nominating convention considered several suggestions (i.e., F.C. Cox, ex-Mayor Cater, A.E. Smith, and Miss Beatrice Brigden), no one had yet consented to stand. The consideration of Miss Beatrice Brigden as a possible federal candidate was the first time in the history of politics in Brandon that a woman had been considered for any elected position other than school board. The Sun, at least, was editorially prepared for such an eventuality as it stated: "A woman member or candidate would no longer rouse hysterical support and opposition...." Brandon Daily Sun, October 21, 1921

The Conservatives had supported a local war hero in the 1920 provincial election. In 1921, they sought out Colonel C.E. Ivens who, however, was not a "Colonel" in the normal sense of the word.[73] While Ivens had, in fact, served with the 12th Manitoba Dragoons as a lieutenant, the Conservative nominee was presumably selected for his "farmer" qualifications. Ivens, after emigrating from England in 1883, had homesteaded in the Virden district whereupon he had helped J.W. Scallion organize that history-making first branch of the Manitoba Grain Growers in 1903. He had served as a reeve of Wallace Municipality and, like his opponent, Robert Forke, he was a past president of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. Brandon Conservatives, in selecting their only "rural" candidate to date, had chosen as close a counterpart to Robert Forke as possible.

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[71] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 74, 63107- 8, H.S. Paterson to James Murdoch, January 28, 1922. In fact, thanks to the efforts of A.E. Hill, the provincial organizer, Cox was not regarded subsequently as an official Liberal candidate. Consequently, he never even received the traditional "thank you" letter from Mackenzie King! Ibid., vol. 62,53258-59, A.E. Hill to King, December 8, 1921

[72] Ibid., 53249, A.E. Hill to King, November 15, 1921

[73] The "Colonel" was only a "nickname" adopted years before to distinguish Ivens from another man with the same surname. Brandon Daily Sun, November 2, 1921

While the Conservatives had chosen a candidate who would, under normal circumstances, have appealed to the rural voter, his possibility of success in 1921 was severely limited. A combination of drought, hail, grasshoppers and a wet harvest had produced in 1921 what veteran politician John T. Haig described as "a terrible state and of course they [the farmers] blame their lack of prosperity on the Government."[74] These depressed agricultural conditions, the Conservatives' high tariff policy, and the "its time for a change" attitude had seemingly created an almost impossible political situation for the Tories. Nevertheless, the Conservatives did try. J.A. Calder, one of the few remaining Liberal Unionists, had advised that the government launch "a strong appeal for women's votes during the last week of the campaign... around unity in war, unity in peace,"[75] and Mrs. Lipsett-Skinner, an active Conservative spokesman, was brought from Winnipeg for meetings in Brandon and Boissevain.[76] On the other hand, when Sir J.A.M. Aikins, the former Brandon M.P. and currently Manitoba's Lieutenant Governor, advised that a strong appeal be made to "Canadian nationality within the

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[74] PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 23, file 61, 013252, John T. Haig to Meighen, December 7, 1921. Consequently, many western M.P.'s were reportedly opposed to an autumn election. According to Cameron's information, the Tories feared that they and the Liberals combined would win only four constituencies between "the Lakes and the Mountains." PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, A.K. Cameron to Crerar, September 12, 1921. The Liberals actually won two ridings while the Conservatives did not win any!

[75] PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 22, file 56, 012655, J.B. Boyce to Meighen, November 17, 1921

[76] Ibid., vol. 25, file 67, 014887, J.H. Ferguson to Meighen, November 19, 1921. Mrs. Lipsett-Skinner, of Winnipeg, had also spoken on Kirkcaldy's behalf in the 1920 provincial election campaign.

British Empire,"[77] especially to the young, first time voters who were searching for a leader; the Prime Minister did not concur as "I do not want to lay myself open fairly to any charge of offensively waving the flag."[78]

However, Meighen's political scruples could hardly be blamed for his party's defeat in the Brandon constituency in 1921! Forke's victory, by a vote of 9,596 to 4,067 for Ivens, was so decisive and so broadly based that the outcome could never have been in doubt. While Forke's greatest majorities were, as one might expect, secured in the rural polls where he led by a total of 7,282 to 2,324, the "farmer" candidate swept 20 of Brandon's 21 polls and he won the city by a total vote of 2,345 to 1,741. F.C. Cox, the "Knott" Liberal, was not a contender in either sector of the constituency as he polled only 250 votes in the city and 145 votes in the larger rural sector.[79] While Brandon voters had not elected a government supporter, they had voted Progressive, as had twelve of the Manitoba's fifteen constituencies. These Manitoba Progressives would, as time passed, align themselves more closely with that Liberal government. Therefore, the pattern of Brandon support for a "ministerialist" candidate, which was notable in each instance to this point in time, with the exception of A.E. Smith's election in 1920, was not significantly altered by Forke's victory in 1921. Brandon voters seemed to be still "in step" as they entered into the 1920s.

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[77] Ibid., vol. 22, file 55, 012304-6, J.A.M. Aikins to Meighen, October 8, 1921

[78] Ibid., file 56, 012445, Meighen to J.A.M. Aikins, October 18, 1921

[79] Brandon Daily Sun, December 7, 1921. Cox's 404 votes were 925 less than Paterson, the Laurier Liberal and a member of this same Knott faction, had polled in 1917.

That some Brandon politicians viewed municipal, provincial and federal politics as all part of a single, common struggle was evident in the Dominion Labor Party's earlier decision, in 1921, to forego participation in the federal election in favour of a concentrated effort in that year's municipal contest.[80] The party, in preparation for those civic elections, had struck a special committee of several members, two of whom were Miss Beatrice Brigden and Miss Penhole. Women, and especially unmarried women, played a more prominent part in the activities of the Dominion Labor Party in Brandon than they did in any other political organization. This concentrated effort at the civic level did produce more "labour" candidates in 1921 as the Dominion Labor Party nominated three aldermanic and four school board candidates, in addition to endorsing an incumbent school board candidate (George Fitton), Alderman B.J. Hales and aldermanic hopeful Fred Young. While this was the most extensive "party" effort to date, the results were not particularly encouraging for the Dominion Labor Party. Despite their earlier success in electing a member of the Manitoba Legislature, their own aldermanic candidates encountered nothing but defeat. While the "endorsed" candidates, Hales and Young, led the polls, the "real" Dominion Labor Party candidates rather badly trailed the field. There was not, by 1921, a sufficient "party" vote in Brandon to elect municipal candidates to office. "Personal appeal" was still obviously more important than party labels at the municipal level.

"Labour" votes, however, could still be vitally significant in municipal politics as demonstrated by Harry Cater's successful bid to return to the mayor's office in 1921. Civic economy had become a major issue during the year as the city's financial liabilities had nearly doubled during those twelve months. While the municipally owned street railway system was still incurring an annual deficit--a sum slightly in excess of $15,000 in 1921,[81] the primary cause of Brandon's financial difficulties seemed, in the minds of many, to be the increase in taxation of five mills[82] which, in turn, led to tax arrears,[83] property abandonment and the spectre of a diminishing business community. Cater's platform (which would become a tradition during the next decade) of civic economy and reduced taxation[84] would be particularly appealing to local businessmen and to those retired farmers who constituted a growing part of this community.[85] However, Cater and Dinsdale, both of whom were relatively "small" businessmen and both of whom were self-proclaimed "friends of labour," were quite evenly matched in 1921. Mayor Dinsdale (who had been re-elected by acclamation in 1920) had actively participated in the several meetings held to plan for the Dominion Labor Party's participation in the 1921 municipal election and he, as previously, described himself as "The People's Candidate."[86]

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[80] *Ibid.*, October 31, 1921

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[81] Ibid., March 18, 1922

[82] The local property tax rate was increased from thirty-five to forty mills in 1921. Ibid., March 22, 1949

[83] The "uncollected" taxes in 1921 alone totalled $191,000. Consequently, the city had to borrow more extensively to compensate for this decline in anticipated revenues. Ibid., April 22, 1922

[84] Ibid., November 16, 1921

[85] The fact that retired farmers, who opposed any proposal for increased taxation, constituted an important part of Cater's support was strongly suggested by former Alderman Donnelly. Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

[86] Brandon Daily Sun, November 24, 1921

However, in 1919 Dinsdale had won election with the business vote, despite his failure to carry the east end working class ward. In 1921, Dinsdale's overall strength was reduced (including in the businessmen's sector), probably as a result of the increase in local taxation rates and the city's alarming financial difficulties. Consequently, Cater's continuing strength in the east end (where he won the King George school poll by 171 votes) provided him with a narrow margin of victory.[87] The combination of a civic economy platform and labour support had provided Brandon's most controversial municipal politician with a new lease on political life.

Cater's election in 1921 marked the beginning of his second "career" as mayor. He would govern, albeit not without challenge, for the next decade and he would become, in the process, Canada's most successful municipal leader.[88] As Cater's political interests, however, were to extend to the provincial field during this decade, his career would provide an excellent opportunity to evaluate the correlation between municipal and provincial politics. Ironically, Harry Cater's ambition in that regard were to be thwarted while the man (i.e., George Dinsdale) that he conquered municipally was to win three elections to the provincial legislature.

In the meantime, Mayor Harry Cater, Dominion Labor Party M.L.A. A.E. Smith and other elected officials had to contend with the city's financial crisis and the resultant 1922 Brandon teachers' strike--difficult problems in what would prove to be a provincial election year. The city's bank, as a result of the extensive tax arrears of 1921, had agreed only to advance 85% of the total 1922 tax levy. Civic authorities, in turn, had been forced to reduce the city budget by some $173,000.[89] A few civic employees were dismissed; mayor and council agreed to forego their annual stipends; and all civic salaries were reduced by 12 1/2% as of March 1, 1922.[90] In addition, the local school board, which was responsible for its own budget, cut teachers' salaries by 25% as of April 1 for the balance of that school year.

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[87] Ibid., November 28, 1921. Cater received 1711 votes while Dinsdale received 1638 votes.

[88] Winnipeg Free Press, April 3, 1945. As found in PAM, Manitoba Biography, B9, 170.

When Brandon teachers refused to accept that decision, the school board dismissed all teachers as of April 30, 1922. The community was engulfed in its first major "labour" crisis since 1919, and that could be of considerable political significance. Actually, the "strike" was effectively broken by mid May as many teachers re-applied for their former positions (and, thus, accepted the reduced salary) while other new staff were employed.[91] In the meantime, Mayor Cater had tried (unsuccessfully) to play the role of mediator[92] and the M.L.A., A.E. Smith, had called at least two public meetings to discuss the crisis. While Smith's role was quite limited, it would appear, from newspaper accounts, that he was probably identified publically with the strikers. This association may have been politically significant for two reasons. First of all, the teachers' strike was presumably unpopular as they

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89. Brandon Daily Sun, April 22, 1922

90. Ibid., February 22, 1922

91. By May 15, only sixteen of eighty-eight positions remained to be filled. Ibid., May 15, 1922

92. Ibid., May 12, 1922

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were opposing the city's policy of civic economy. Secondly, the strike was a failure and wise politicians should probably avoid public identification with failing causes as that is not good for "image building."

However, Smith's position on the Brandon Teachers' Strike seemed to be of little consequence by the time that the 1922 provincial election occurred. The question of what parties would field candidates locally was seemingly more significant. Brandon Liberals, for example, appeared uncertain of what tactic to adopt, even though Premier Norris had now aligned himself fully with the federal party.[93] While men such as ex-Mayor J.W. Fleming and even Premier Norris were rumoured to be possible Liberal candidates for Brandon,[94] local Liberals were still prepared to consider cooperating with Brandon Conservatives if that would prevent Smith from securing another "minority" victory. The decision to support a "fusionist" candidate was easier for the local Conservatives. Their party had had little success in 1920 in the province as a whole and, locally, Kirkcaldy (the Independent) had trailed the field. The 1921 federal election had also been a disappointment and their candidate in that contest believed that the party's support was still declining:

> It is hard to know who our friends are now...many who were with us last December are now working either for Grit or U.F.M.[95]

The Conservatives clearly had little or nothing to lose.

As a result, the two parties agreed to nominate a single candidate. Subsequently, a joint nominating committee of twenty-six members, having determined that the present Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. G.H. Malcolm, would not stand for Brandon as an Independent, placed the names of W.I. Smale, Mayor Cater and Dr. J.H. Edmison before the 168 voting delegates.[96] As in 1917, this joint Liberal-Conservative nominating convention decided that a popular "non-politician" such as Dr. J.H. Edmison could most effectively represent these two traditionally opposing political camps. Edmison, the son of an Ontario Presbyterian minister, had practised medicine in Dunrea for many years before moving to Brandon in 1908. By the time of his nomination in 1922, the forty-nine year old physician had reportedly achieved an extraordinary popularity. He was, in the subsequent words of a contemporary politician, "the salt of the earth—the grandest chap God ever put breath in";[97] a man who was "almost worshipped for his medical services."[98] This joint nominating convention had chosen well.

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[93] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 74, 63159-60, A.E. Hill to A. Haydon, May 3, 1922

[94] Brandon Daily Sun, March 23, 1922

[95] PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 101, file 103, 058015, Chas. E. Ivens to W.A. Boys, June 20, 1922

There were several rather distinct features to Edmison's campaign in 1922. First of all, his supporters claimed that Edmison, as an Independent, could work successfully with any government that might be formed after the next provincial election. As the multiplicity of candidates, many of whom were Independents, and the fragmented condition of the parties suggested that no party would secure a majority in that election, Edmison's non-partisan flexibility could well be viewed as an asset. This could be particularly appealing when one considers that Brandonites, by electing Smith in 1920, had placed their constituency on the "non-ministerialist" side of the house for the first time since 1886. Brandon voters were also warned, in 1922, that their community had suffered economically as a result as new business had (allegedly) been frightened away.

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[96] The fact that Harry Cater was even considered is interesting in light of his earlier political identity as a "pro-labour" politician. Obviously, this man had a broad and relatively non-partisan political appeal. W.I. Smale, the manager of the Provincial Fair and Exhibition Association, withdrew in favour of Dr. J.H. Edmison. On the other hand, Cater (who was not selected by the "fusionists") subsequently decided to stand himself as an Independent. However, he withdrew on the eve of the 1922 provincial election. Manitoba Free Press, July 10, 1922

[97] Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

[98] Ibid.

> Confidence in Brandon among outside industries...can only come if the citizens wipe out the mistakes of the past. Brandon cannot any longer afford to let itself be advertised as a possible seat for turbulence...or as the hunting ground of ultra radical leaders.[99]

In addition, Edmison, who decried "lavish post-war expenditures" and stressed the need for "sane, safe, responsible government,"[100] warned that there were some (including presumably A.E. Smith)

> ...who are opposed to economy of any kind.... They would go on the principle of borrowing and spending, borrow all you can and spend recklessly.... Repayment, bankruptcy, or repudiation means nothing to them.[101]

Thus, a vote for Edmison constituted a vote for a responsible, economy-minded, ministerialist candidate. It was an effective appeal in those economically troubled days in 1922.

The Edmison forces also sought to separate the Labor Party M.L.A. from his labour support by denying that Smith, the "Red,"[102] was a true representative of the local labour community. For example, R.T. Smith, the man who had placed second to A.E. Smith at the 1920 nominating convention, publically declared, in 1922, that the M.L.A. did not truly represent him as a labourman.[103] Both Alderman Robert Crawford, whom the Dominion Labor Party had refused to endorse in the 1920 municipal elections, and C.P. Kamienski, a north end resident, campaigned against A.E. Smith in 1922. Kamienski, for his part, told of his own Russian experiences and his dire warnings about the horrors of Bolshevism were blatantly designed to frighten would-be Smith supporters. Finally, even Premier Norris attacked the Brandon M.L.A. in alarming terms.

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[99] Brandon Daily Sun, May 31, 1922

[100] Ibid., June 7, 1922

[101] Ibid.

[102] While A.E. Smith was not yet an avowed Communist, he was reportedly regarded by many as being a "Red." Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

> I do not think that Mr. Smith is a Labor man at all, but that he is a socialist of the extreme kind; he is opposed to the present system of constitutional government and therefore cannot be considered a good citizen of Manitoba.[104]

In 1920, a majority of the voters had voted either Liberal or "Independent" and those same voters could now defeat the Dominion Labor Party M.L.A.—if they were to go to the polls as a united force. Smith, on the other hand, had received only 2,000 votes in 1920 and he needed to win additional support if he were to survive this "one on one" contest. As a result, Smith held many public meetings which

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[103] Brandon Daily Sun, June 14, 1922. If this was the same R.T. Smith who was listed that year as a member of the federal Liberal Association executive in Brandon, his statement would have to be considered in that light. Ibid., March 24, 1922

[104] Ibid., June 22, 1922. One of the interesting features of the 1922 election in Brandon was the fact that the local contest occurred in almost total isolation from the rest of the general election. Provincial issues were largely ignored although Premier Norris and ex-Attorney General Thos. Johnson each spoke on Edmison's behalf.

Edmison needed not (and did not) do. The election day results would, in the opinion of one Winnipeg newspaper, determine the relative values "of good organization work as opposed to educational work...."[105]

The results were a decisive victory for Edmison, his personal popularity, his "get out the vote" political organization and, probably, his "scare" campaign. Clement and Kirkcaldy together had polled only 2,648 votes in 1920 but the popular physician, as an Independent, received 3,281 votes in 1922. Smith, on the other hand, had polled his maximum strength in 1920 with 2,007 votes or so his 1922 total of 2,060 suggests. It was the fusionists who had stood to gain and fear of what Smith's re-election could mean to Brandon undoubtedly aided their cause. Ironically, it would appear, therefore, that Smith's victory in 1920 served as a catalyst in the formation and success of the "fusion" movement. A.E. Smith by winning in 1920 had sown the seeds of his own political destruction two years later.

However, while Smith's previous success had obviously facilitated the union of the Liberal and Conservatives forces in 1922, this "fusion" has occurred infrequently in history. Why did a policy of cooperation succeed in 1922? Certainly the fact that the Labor Party held the seat was insufficient in itself to coalesce opposing parties as would be evident in Brandon in later years.[106] Perhaps the key factors in 1922 were that the Conservatives had little or no hope of success--either in the Brandon constituency or in the province as a whole--while the Liberals were prepared to forego the nomination of a regular party candidate in favour of a jointly acceptable, popular, non-politician. As Edmison, as an Independent, would probably give general support to the Norris government, should it be re-elected, neither party stood to lose significantly by entering into this union. The fact that the federal Liberal and Conservative politicians were not involved in this local contest was also significant as their entry would have introduced an element of party rivalry and divisiveness: hence, the coalition would have been threatened as a result. Finally, the fact that Smith was more than just a "Labor" M.L.A.--that he was reputed to be "Red"--meant that Liberal and Conservatives could be more easily persuaded to set aside their lesser differences in the face of a "real" common enemy. Therefore, the personal qualities of both Smith and Edmison were extremely important to understanding why and how the "fusionist" victory of 1922 occurred.

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[105] Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 17, 1922

[106] L.S. Evans held Brandon East for the N.D.P. at the time of the 1973 provincial election but an attempt to secure an alliance locally between the Liberals and the Conservatives failed.

The fact that this "fusion" had occurred successfully at the provincial level suggested that the same cooperation might be practised at other levels of politics, providing that the circumstances were reasonably similar. Surely, the appearance of the "Citizens' Committee" in the 1922 municipal election was the result of the "fusionist's" success against A.E. Smith a few months before. The fact that the Dominion Labor Party was again, as in 1921, making a fairly determined bid for municipal representation undoubtedly persuaded many observers that the political struggle in which they were engaged was occurring at all levels in the political process. While the locale was different, the war was the same.

The Dominion Labor Party, for its part, endorsed a full slate of aldermanic candidates, including Alderman Grantham, although it did not endorse either of the two mayoralty candidates. The "Citizens' Committee" endorsed four of the incumbent aldermen who were seeking re-election (excluding Alderman Grantham) plus George Epton, who had lost by a small margin in the previous year. In addition, the "Citizens' Committee" endorsed Harry Cater in his bid for re-election as mayor. The reasons prescribed for the "Citizens' Committee" endorsement, in all cases, was the experience of the candidates and their advocation of "civic economy."[107]

The municipal elections in 1922 were clearly a victory for civic economy[108] and a defeat for the Dominion Labor Party. In fact, this conservative-minded coalition had secured its second major victory of the year as the entire "slate"--Mayor Cater and the five "Citizens' Committee" endorsed aldermanic candidates--swept to a decisive victory. Cater, who had narrowly defeated the then incumbent Mayor by 72 votes in 1921, now outpolled Dinsdale by more than 500 votes in this third and final "round" between the two. Dinsdale, previously the "boy-wonder" of the Sun and the business community, seemingly campaigned without organized support in 1922 and the Salvation Armyist won only the city's two north end polls. Harry Cater's identification with civic economy was winning for this "small" businessman a growing popularity at the polls. Had he, in fact, found the political key to Brandon in the 1920s?

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[107] Brandon Daily Sun, November 23, 1922

[108] Brandon electors also endorsed a proposal for a city manager form of government in 1922 by a relatively close vote of 1,753 to 1,559. The argument in favour of the proposal was that this system would produce a more business-like (and economic) form of civic administration. Although the community was divided, the "conservative" business community would seem to have been the major proponent and there was least enthusiasm in the city's north and east ends--the working class sector. Therefore, the decision to establish such a system seems to be further evidence of "conservative" strength in 1922.

"Labour," on the other hand, had suffered a series of major setbacks as this post-war era drew to a close. The teachers' strike had been a failure while "labour's" earlier political gains (that had followed upon the 1919 strikes) had been essentially swept away by the end of 1922. Labour's opponents had combined successfully to defeat A.E. Smith, one of the few Labour M.L.A.'s in the province, and to thwart the Dominion Labor Party's bid for power at the municipal level. Ironically, "labour" had campaigned for (and secured) the abolition of the ward systems only to see veteran "labour" Alderman Grantham defeated, despite the fact that he polled approximately 1,400 votes. Although "labour" had a core of approximately 1,000 votes in Brandon, that "party" vote, in itself, was insufficient to elect candidates on a city-wide basis. They had, therefore, lost the "regional" advantage that they had previously enjoyed in the city's east end.[109]

As this post-war era drew to a close, the federal constituency of Brandon--of which the city constituted about 40% of the population--suddenly achieved an unprecedented (and as yet unequalled) prominence in federal politics when Robert Forke succeeded T.A. Crerar as national leader of the Progressives.[110] According to newspaper reports, this sixty-two year old farmer M.P. could also have succeeded to the Premiership of Manitoba after the July provincial election, had he wished.[111]

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[109] While "labour" traditionally did well in the north end--i.e., north of "the tracks"--that vote had been "split" by the manner in which the ward boundaries were drawn. While the "north end" did have its "own" candidate in both the 1921 and 1922 aldermanic elections, Frank Peltz, who received approximately 900 votes in each instance, could not secure enough city-wide support to secure his election.

Certainly the task would not be easy, as Forke would have to struggle with the problem that had frustrated Crerar--that of defining the political relationship between the Progressives and the Liberals. And, as Forke admitted, even his own constituents were badly divided on this question.

> I was in Brandon yesterday and repeatedly, I was asked...what about the union of Progressives and Liberals? Most of my Brandon Liberal friends seem anxious for this to happen. On the other hand, an ardent supporter of mine at last election, wanted to know why I did not make a public denial....[112]

While the Progressives had obviously not resolved the question of union (or, for many, re-union) with the Liberals, the fact that the "conservative" Progressives, Forke included, were seriously leaning in that direction suggests that the coalescence of like-minded forces, which was evident in both municipal and provincial politics in Brandon in 1922, was a part of the federal political phenomena as well. This "conservative" coalescence, it would appear, was a response to the economic turmoil and (in the case of municipal and provincial politics) to a fear of political radicalism in this post-war era--the "turbulent years."

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110. While many observers would subsequently express their reservations about Forke's political capabilities, Clifford Sifton, at least, believed in the wisdom of that choice: "I have the greatest respect for his character and his capacity. I have no doubt that he is the ablest man in the party." PAC, C. Sifton Papers, vol. 209, 163251, Sifton to Dafoe, November 13, 1922

111. Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 20, 1922

112. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 121, R. Forke to Crerar, October 26, 1922

Chapter VI

The Era of Prosperity, Coalition and Cater

The 1920s--or at least the post-1922 1920s--were "good years" for Brandon. The tumultuous post-war era was succeeded by an age of renewed growth. For example, Brandon's population, which had declined from its pre-war time high of 17,177 (in 1914) to 15,397 in the post-war era (i.e., in 1921), grew slowly throughout the decade. Thus, this city of 17,082[1] (by 1931) had recovered that which had been lost (in terms of population) during the war years.

However, post-war Brandon was different from the pre-war city in certain respects. For example, the population itself was growing increasingly older. Only 3.96% of the total community had been sixty years of age and older at the time of the 1916 enumeration:[2] that percentage had increased to 5.70% in 1921[3] and it would rise to 11.18% in 1936.[4] The growth of the city's "retired" population could be politically significant, especially in light of the fact that this age group constituted an even larger 16.79% of the twenty year old plus portion of the community by 1936. Whether any single politician or party could "corner" this segment of the electorate was a question of importance. Meanwhile, the city was becoming perceptably less British as that component declined from 76.34% in 1921 to 72.86% of the total in 1936. This change, however, was so slight that one wonders whether the "ethnic issue" would be as significant in this post-war era as it had been in the pre-war era. Perhaps the decline in immigration had, for the moment, alleviated the city's identity crisis? That, too, could be politically significant. Post-war Brandon was also different from its pre-war counterpart in respect to the role of "labour" as an economic and political force. While the return to a post-war prosperity helped calm the labour front economically, a seemingly more pronounced working class consciousness presumably contributed to the emergence of "labour" as a municipal political force within the next few years.

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[1] *Census of Canada, 1971*

[2] *Census of Prairie Provinces, 1916*

[3] *Census of Canada, 1921*

[4] *Census of Prairie Provinces, 1936*

While the 1920s would generally be regarded as the "good years"--"the roaring twenties"--a few observant Brandonites viewed the future rather apprehensively in 1923 and 1924. Local property taxes had risen sharply in the post-war era--from twenty-five mills in 1918; to thirty in 1919; to thirty-five in 1920; and to an unprecedented peak of forty mills in 1921.[5] Consequently, many tax bills went unpaid. In fact, Brandon taxpayers, in early 1923, owed $762,767.17 for "tax arrears... and tax sale certificates..."[6] and, as a result, the city had to borrow extensively to meet its immediate obligations. By 1924, the city's debt was an estimated $2.1 million dollars[7]--although much of that debt (i.e., $760,000) was not payable until the early 1930s.[8]

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[5] The mill rate was reduced to thirty-nine in 1924. Brandon Daily Sun, March 22, 1924

[6] It appeared that some property, as a result of excessive taxation, was being abandoned to the city. Ibid., January 2, 1923

[7] Ibid., August 6, 1924. The civic debt was actually larger than 2.1 million dollars. However, the excess amount was "covered" by city owned bonds. Should those assets be reduced in value for any reason, the city's own responsibilities would be proportionally increased.

[8] Ironically, no one could yet foresee the economic and political significance of a heavy indebtedness which would become payable during the height of what proved to be the "Depression Years."

The apprehensions of the few were not politically significant, however. While some aldermen argued in vain against the appointment of a city manager in 1924 on the grounds that the estimated cost of some $7,000 could not be economically justified,[9] and although council and mayor were deeply divided on several "procedural" matters[10] and on the question of Sunday golf,[11] Mayor Cater was re-elected by acclamation in 1924--just as he had been in 1923.[12] Thus began this post-war era--"the era of prosperity...and Cater."

While a state of contented complacency seemed to predominate in the field of partisan politics in Brandon in 1923 and 1924, the "behind the scenes" preparations for the anticipated 1925 federal election had commenced by 1924. Although vital party decisions--

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[9] Brandon Daily Sun, January 22, 1924. The salary was to be $4200 per year, but there would, of course, be additional expenses.

[10] One of Cater's most predominant characteristics as mayor in the 1920s was the growing tendency for frequent conflict with his council. For example, Cater's investigations into the qualifications of individual aldermen in 1924 led council to adjourn one meeting prematurely in protest against the mayor's refusal to explain his actions. Ibid., April 26, 1924

[11] This issue precipitated "one of the bitterest and closest fights on the city council in many years." Ibid., August 19, 1924. Mayor Cater, Alderman George Dinsdale (a Salvation Armyist), and the local Ministerial Association were strongly opposed. When Cater ruled a pro-Sunday golf resolution out of order, council sought a judicial ruling on the validity of the mayor's ruling.

[12] In 1923, one William Brigden did join the incumbent aldermen in filing nomination papers but this well-intentioned citizen subsequently withdrew in the face of a public protest against this "unnecessary" and "costly" election! Ibid., November 26, 1923. In 1924, seven aldermanic candidates did stand: however, the 28% of the electorate who went to the polls re-elected the incumbents seemingly without much question. Ibid., December 1, 1924. Admittedly, some did suggest that this apparent electoral disinterest was due to the fact that certain wards (i.e., one and two in 1924) were not directly represented on council. Others contended that the requirement to vote for five candidates (and no less) was a deterrent. Ibid., December 2, 1924

such as the question of whether or not the Conservatives could afford to appoint a provincial organizer[13]--were normally made by a small, inner circle (normally resident in Winnipeg), the major question of Liberal-Progressive relations depended to a large degree on what transpired in the Brandon constituency.

Although T. A. Crerar strongly disagreed with those who suggested that Progressivism as a political force was disintegrating,[14] Mackenzie King was hopeful that his party and the Progressives could cooperate together in the face of their common enemy, the high tariff Conservatives.[15] Many Manitoba Liberals, however, were opposed to such proposals for cooperation. They had just lost the 1922 provincial election to the farmers and, consequently, the provincial Liberal executive "was practically of one mind, in the desire to have a

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[13] While the need for a provincial organizer was apparent, Meighen warned that there was only $2,000 available for party work in Manitoba. PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 101, file 103(2), 058079, Meighen to Senator Sharpe, December 23, 1924. The shortage of funds may not have been the Conservative's only problem in 1924. The party seemed to be plagued with organizational difficulties during most of the period of Meighen's leadership. While the long time Meighen-Rogers conflict may have been responsible for some of the party's difficulties in Manitoba, Meighen tended to blame himself for many of the weaknesses:

> "I find it hard to persuade myself that there is not fault on my part, when, month after month and year after year, a stalemate exists in the province from which I come."

Ibid., vol. 101, file 103(1), 057492, Meighen to Theo H. Hunt, October 15, 1924

[14] "I think...their political judgement of western Canada...is certainly wrong. Frankly, I do not think the notion of western solidarity was ever so strong as it is today, especially in the Prairie Provinces." PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, August 1, 1924

[15] This was Mackenzie King's message when he spoke in the presence of Robert Forke who appeared on the same platform in Brandon in 1924. *Brandon Daily Sun*, October 7, 1924

Liberal candidate in every constituency...."[16] In particular, they were anxious to nominate T. C. Norris, their former premier,[17] to stand against Robert Forke in Brandon. This confrontation, local Conservatives realized, could be extremely politically significant. Although their willingness to support Norris[18] under those circumstances would mean "abandoning" the Brandon constituency, the Conservatives stood to gain elsewhere if this contest destroyed Mackenzie King's hopes of securing a Liberal-Progressive alliance.[19] While the nomination of the candidate was normally a local matter, Mackenzie King, who was anxious to avoid "three way fights" wherever possible,[20] intervened personally, it would appear, to prevent a Norris-Forke

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16. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 115, 98104, F.C. Hamilton to King, January 31, 1925

17. Norris still sat for Lansdowne which itself was part of the Brandon federal riding.

18. "Tories have no one spoken of so far. Liberals want us to leave it to Norris." PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 101, file 103(2), 058161, N.K. Boyd to Meighen, April 9, 1925. The Conservatives did not nominate until relatively late in the campaign and they explained that they were still hoping that Norris would stand. Brandon Daily Sun, October 13, 1925

19. Crerar estimated that the Conservatives would win twelve to fifteen seats in Manitoba if there were three-cornered fights throughout the province. PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, August 11, 1925. There were, however, only five "three-way" contests in 1925 and the Conservatives won four of them. The Progressives won the fifth. The fact that the Conservatives were held to only seven seats in Manitoba may well have been due to the avoidance of more three-way struggles. J.M. Beck, Pendulum of Power (Scarborough 1968), 183

20. "Wish you see Manitoba Liberal Association and settle definitely avoidance three cornered fights." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 115, 98356, L.C. Moyer to A. Haydon, August 25, 1925. L.C. Moyer was Mackenzie King's private secretary and this coded message, a common method of written communication, was sent to Haydon, the Secretary of the National Liberal Association and the man responsible for party organization.

encounter.[21] Thus, the role of the local politicians was strictly limited at this preliminary stage--even in these unusual circumstances.

Despite the relative prosperity of the mid 1920s, some observers--including key Manitoba Liberals[22]--contended that the Mackenzie King government was in difficulty. On the other hand, Robert Forke was personally considered to be vulnerable in 1925. Admittedly, those Ottawa "rumour-mongers" who deliberated on the question of his successor in early 1925[23] may have been assuming that Norris would oppose Forke in Brandon. Nevertheless, there were some disturbing signs of declining Progressive strength. For example, while some 2,000 delegates had attended the 1923 convention of the United Farmers of Manitoba, that number shrank drastically to 281 in 1925.[24] Likewise, a local Progressive organizational meeting in September 1925 only drew eleven people and the number who attended Forke's subsequent nomination was relatively small.[25] In addition, the Progressives had lost significant "labour" support when the "Ginger Group" had separated in 1924, and it could be assumed that the Pipestone area farmer--whose leadership may have contributed to that defection[26]--would suffer in the city as a result. The fact that William Ivens, a prominent I.L.P. M.L.A., was chosen to speak at Forke's nomination perhaps indicated that his supporters were conscious of this danger.[27]

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[21] "I am wondering if it would not be well for you personally to see Mr. Forke and let him know of the pressure which was brought upon you to oppose him personally, and the extent to which we both exerted our influence to avoid such a step." Ibid., vol. 121, 103245, King to T.C. Norris, November 23, 1925

[22] A.B. Hudson, for one, reportedly believed that King would lose this next election. PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, January 28, 1924

[23] Ibid., A.K. Cameron to Crerar, May 11, 1925

[24] PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 101, file 103(2), 058138, Nat Boyd to Meighen, February 10, 1925

[25] Brandon Daily Sun, September 29, 1925. Some 150 were reported to be in attendance.

The Conservatives chose a prominent Brandon businessman, D.W. Beaubier, to oppose Forke in the 1925 federal election. The sixty-one year old Beaubier had emigrated to the Souris area from Perth County, Ontario, in 1882. After having farmed and worked as a C.P.R. trainman, Beaubier had moved to the city where he became well known--for his war record overseas[28] and as a hotelman. The nomination of this reputedly popular[29] city resident would enable the Conservatives to make a particular appeal for the Brandon vote in this rural farmer versus city businessman contest. That urban vote, however, constituted less than 40% of the total constituency electorate.

Certainly the Conservatives campaigned strenuously within Brandon itself and they made a particular appeal to local railway employees, the group which still constituted the largest single labour force in Brandon. The C.P.R. (and of course the new C.N.R.) was a primary beneficiary of the traditional Conservative "National Policy" of which protective tariffs were an integral part. Thus, Senator

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[26] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, August 1, 1924. Crerar, as ex-leader of the Progressives, was undoubtedly in a good position to judge on this particular issue.

[27] Brandon Daily Sun, September 29, 1925

[28] He attained the rank of Colonel. Ibid., July 29, 1926

[29] Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

Gideon Robertson, a former trade unionist and the man who had been appointed Minister of Labor in the 1917 Union government, stressed the fact that the Conservatives' higher tariff policy would help restore the 20,000 railway jobs that had been lost in Canada since 1921. Robertson also promised this "railway town" that the Conservatives would not amalgamate the C.P.R. and the C.N.R. The denial of this rumour would hopefully reassure those employees who feared that amalgamation would lessen their bargaining power. T.A. Crerar contended, however, that Conservative attempts to conciliate the C.N. vote particularly were largely unsuccessful.[30]

> My impression all along has been that the CN people in the west were opposed to Meighen. They resent his criticism of the railways and of Thornton....[31]

Certainly the Conservatives made a determined attempt to woo this railway vote (which was itself divided into two segments). They were, however, to be disappointed by the results.[32]

The Conservatives also made a most determined effort to win support in the city's north end on the apparent assumption that the ethnic vote was "loose." "New" men such as Joe Jaworski, Carl Korsky, Fred Barousky and Mike Holowicz were added to Beaubier's election committee,[33] while Andrew Bojarski spoke on behalf of the Conservative nominee at a north end meeting. Forke, Bojarski charged, could not be trusted as his pro-labour speeches made in "the Flats" were very different from those made elsewhere in the constituency.[34] This part of the Conservative campaign may have been more fruitful: at least Crerar later reported--in general terms--that the "Ruthenian or Galician vote in a great many districts went almost solidly Tory."[35]

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[30] This rift was a by-product of the era of railway nationalization although A.K. Cameron, the Montreal M.P., reported that Senator Robertson was now speaking well of Thornton, the president of the C.N.R. PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, A.K. Cameron to Crerar, October 8, 1925

[31] Ibid., Crerar to A.K. Cameron, October 14, 1925

[32] Brandon Daily Sun, October 16, 1925. Meighen later contended that Beaubier would have won the seat in 1925 had it not been for the fact that the Liberals had falsely charged that the Conservatives intended to merge the two railway companies. Ibid., August 12, 1926

[33] Ibid., October 13, 1925

If Forke could be accused of having conflicting views on labour, the Conservatives similarly were guilty. While pro-Beaubier north end residents campaigned among their fellow countrymen, the pro-Conservative Sun[36] appealed to local fears of labour radicalism by describing Ivens (who spoke at Forke's nomination) as "the Winnipeg Red"[37] and by reminding its readers that Robert Forke had supported J.S. Woodsworth in his opposition to the establishment of a Mounted Police barracks in Brandon.[38] While Forke contended that the need for governmental economy had led to the decision not to construct such a facility in the "Wheat City,"[39] Brandon, nevertheless, had lost some $5,000 in preliminary expenditures and the anticipated estimated annual revenue of $120,000.[40] Whether Robert Forke, the Progressive, could truly be held accountable for the failures of the Mackenzie King government was a question which the pro-Conservative Sun chose to ignore.

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[34] Ibid., October 28, 1925

[35] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, October 31, 1925

[36] William Noakes, the editor of the Sun, was apparently participating rather openly in the Conservative party in 1925. For example, he seems to have been a party representative at a Conservative nominating convention in Portage at this time. Brandon Daily Sun, June 11, 1925

[37] Ibid., September 29, 1925

[38] These barracks had been promised to Brandon late in the previous decade. While some officers and men were temporarily located in the city, the promise went unfilled.

[39] Brandon Daily Sun, October 27, 1925

While the Sun also stressed that Forke--as a member of a third party--"can do nothing [for the Brandon constituency],"[41] the effect of this appeal to the constituency's self-interest was probably minimized by the fact that Forke did have the "unofficial" support of the local Liberals who had decided not to nominate in Brandon. The public support of individuals such as Mrs. S.E. Clement, the wife of the former Liberal M.L.A., was obviously designed to reinforce that impression.[42] Thus, Forke was obviously less of a "third party" candidate in 1925 than he had been in 1921.

It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that Brandon City voters did follow the Sun's exhortations to vote Conservative and that was undoubtedly--in part--a ministerialist vote. Whereas the city's electors had given Robert Forke a margin of 654 votes in 1921, they reversed that decision in 1925 by a vote of 2,700 to 1,633 in favour the Conservative candidate.[43] While some of that support may have been for Beaubier, the "local" candidate,[44] Brandon City electors were clearly in step with most of English Canada--in fact, the Conservatives did win more seats than any other political party in that 1925 election. While subsequent developments proved otherwise, it did appear that Brandon City voters--although not the constituency as a whole--had correctly determined which was to be "right" side of the house! However, what was most immediately apparent was that Robert Forke's rural strength was sufficient to overcome the Conservative majority in the city.[45] As a result, Robert Forke defeated D.W. Beaubier by a total vote of 6,411 to 5,428.

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[40] Ibid., October 6, 1924

[41] Ibid., October 28, 1925

[42] Mrs. Clement contended that Forke was even more "liberal" than Mackenzie King! Ibid., October 27, 1925

[43] Ibid., October 30, 1925

[44] Beaubier undoubtedly had a greater appeal for city voters than had C.E. Ivens, the Virden district farmer, in 1921..

While Forke had foiled those who had predicted his political demise, the reduction in his majority from over 5,500 to 983 was so immense that it requires some explanation. Certainly the national Conservative resurgence that all but put Arthur Meighen in office was of consequence in Brandon. Beaubier, one suspects, was personally politically stronger than C.E. Ivens, the Conservative nominee in 1921. The Progressives as a party by 1925 were but a shadow of the movement that had swept the prairies in 1921 and that too must have been consequential. However, an intriguing (and oft-forgotten) additional factor was the smaller total vote. Over two thousand fewer voters went to the polls in 1925 than had done so in 1921. While there is no specific explanation for this reduced vote,[46] the results should serve as a useful reminder that one of the most vital factors in successful politics is "to get the vote out." The Conservatives, who smelled victory in 1925, were eager; the Progressives, whose future was dim, were undoubtedly less enthusiastic. That difference might well explain the 1925 election results in both Brandon and the constituency of which it was a part.

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[45] The Brandon vote was 2,700 to 1,633 for Beaubier over Forke while the Progressive won the remainder of the constituency by a total of 4,737 to 2,637. There were, therefore, 4,333 votes cast in the city and 7,374 polled outside the city. These preliminary returns, although incomplete, provide an accurate insight into the distribution of the vote.

[46] Admittedly those 404 Liberal "diehards" who had voted for F.C. Cox in 1921 might well have refused to support a Progressive in 1925. However, there is no explanation for the failure of the other 1,600 to respond.

One of the key factors in determining the amount of electoral interest in any issue was obviously the degree of self-interest that existed. That seems to have been true at the municipal level in 1925 in the case of Brandon's electrical supply problem. The need for an expanded electrical supply was one of the city's post-war problems and there were several alternatives. While Mayor Cater and the labour community preferred the provincially owned Manitoba Hydro,[47] that body was reluctant to provide specific quotes. On the other hand, the Canada Gas and Electric Company (a subsidiary of a Cleveland firm), the city's current supplier, did make a specific offer. In fact, this company even indicated a willingness to purchase the city's unprofitable street railway system. However, the latter "deal" could not be concluded[48] and the company's electrical supply proposal was put to the ratepayers in a special referendum. While the rather decisive defeat of the proposal by a vote of 861 to 277 was not, in

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47. It is interesting to note that Cater was also a member of the provincial hydro commission. Brandon Daily Sun, August 21, 1924

48. The street railway system, which Brandon voters in 1912 had assumed would be a profitable venture, had proved to be a costly experiment in public ownership as it had incurred an average annual loss of $15,000. However, Mayor Cater contended that this system which had cost some $440,000 was worth $185,000 rather that the $50,000 which the Canada Gas and Electric Company offered (provided that it was exempt from all civic taxation). Ibid., March 11, 1925

itself, of obvious political significance, the emergence during the "campaign" of another citizens group (entitled the Greater Brandon Citizens' Committee) with particular support in the city's north and east ends was perhaps the first signs of the birth of the "labour" movement which proved to be remarkably successful in Brandon in the latter half of the 1920s.[49] Despite the public interest generated by this particular referendum, the number of well publicized encounters between Mayor Cater and his council,[50] and an unprecedented "incident" in which two hundred "north side" female residents physically attacked city workmen with sticks and stones,[51] Mayor Cater was again re-elected by acclamation in 1925. Actually, Cater, who had strongly opposed the Canada Gas and Electric Company proposal and who had quickly conceded to his irate female constituents, had remained "in step" with public opinion--which was, of course, the safest place for any politician to be.

Being "in step" for Robert Forke after 1925 presumably meant supporting the gradual re-union of the Progressives with the Liberal party. Although Forke was undoubtedly grateful for the Liberal support that he had received in 1925, the Progressive leader was not prepared to resign in favour of T.C. Norris as Mackenzie King, it would appear, suggested.[52] Nevertheless, the combination of declining Progressive electoral strength and the "emergence" of Meighen's high tariff Conservative government in 1926 caused Forke and the Manitoba Progressives to support the Liberals openly. Subsequently, the federal Liberals and Manitoba Progressives functioned essentially as a Liberal-Progressive coalition. Forke, for example, was nominated officially by both the Progressives and the Liberals. The open participation of both Premier Charles Dunning and James Gardiner, Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture (and the Liberals' chief organizer in Western Canada), in the 1926 campaign[53] further attested to the extent of the reunion.[54] Forke's refusal of the proffered assistance of T.A. Crerar,

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[49] It is interesting to note that Beatrice Brigden made one of her first reported public appearances at a meeting in the north end Polish Hall at which time she exhorted her "comrades" to take this opportunity "to strike a blow at our common enemy, capitalism." Ibid., August 8, 1925. Miss Brigden stood as a labour candidate in Brandon in the 1930 federal election.

[50] Cater again challenged the eligibility of two aldermen "on highly technical grounds." Ibid., May 2, 1925. Although one alderman did resign, the refusal of Alderman Curran to vacate his seat led to a number of rather "ugly incidents" in public. The image of Harry Cater as a rather divisive and dogmatic mayor was hardening.

[51] These north side residents were protesting a council decision "to top" their street with ashes, rather than gravel. Cater immediately promised to provide them with their desired gravel surfacing! Ibid., August 20, 1925

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52. Norris, the former premier, had eventually run in Winnipeg where he had been unsuccessful. King suggested that Forke should be reminded of the fact that Norris would have been nominated against him (Forke) in Brandon, had the Liberal hierarchy not intervened. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 121, 103245, King to T.C. Norris, November 23, 1925

53. Both Dunning and Gardiner attended Forke's Liberal nominating convention and Gardiner returned later to speak in Virden after Forke had appealed for help. Ibid., vol. 131, 11790, J.G. Gardiner to King, August 31, 1926. T.C. Norris, the former Liberal premier, also campaigned extensively on Forke's behalf.

54. There would, however, be a price to pay for this re-alignment.

> "Some of the Conservative Progressives are going back to the fold-my giving support to the King Gov't [sic] provides a convenient excuse. I rather think Hoey is a bit of a Torie [sic] when you scratch deep enough. I know that [?] he and Chapman do [not?] make it any easier for me in there [sic] visits to Brandon Constituency, of course this is between ourselves."

QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 107, R. Forke to Crerar, August 11, 1926 the former Progressive leader,[55] suggests that the Brandon M.P. was most anxious to solidify his new found identity. Robert Forke had carefully made the transition from Progressive to Liberal-Progressive. As events would subsequently prove, Robert Forke--the coalitionist--was clearly "in step" with Canadian public opinion in 1926.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, had won Brandon itself in 1925 and the new generation of local party leaders that had become prominent in the mid 1920s[56] maintained a greatly accelerated pace of political activity after that 1925 election campaign. The fact that the Young Conservatives held weekly dances during the summer of 1926 was a rather curious revival of pre-war "social" political activity. Perhaps the re-appearance of this "fun" type of politics was a direct result of the new "wave" of younger political leaders who had assumed responsibility locally.

The Conservatives, however, did not intend simply "to dance" their way to victory! They had again nominated the Brandonite Beaubier to oppose Forke and the fight, in Forke's opinion, "is pretty strenuous and I feel there are more than Beaubier directing and managing this campaign in Brandon."[57] However, although W.G. Rathwell, a former Progressive candidate in 1922, did speak in the rural portions of the constituency,[58] Beaubier's only major outside support came from the Prime Minister.

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[55] Crerar offered to speak for Forke in 1926. However, while Forke had sought Crerar's assistance in vain just eleven months before, the Liberal-Progressive nominee now explained rather lamely that there were no suitable locations available as Dunning was already slated for Brandon and Gardiner for Virden. Ibid., box 120, R. Forke to Crerar, August 29, 1926

[56] Local political leadership does seem to surface "in generations" as one group--after several years--is replaced by an essentially new body. For example, young men such as H.A. McNeill, C.C. Mitchell, R.L. McQuarrie, E.C. Whitehead, F.R. Longworth and J.M. Donaldson had organized a Young Conservative Club in March 1926 (Brandon Daily Sun, March 9, 1926) and these "newcomers" constituted the group elected to represent Brandon at the 1926 provincial convention. Ibid., July 29, 1926. C.C. Mitchell, a vice-president of the Young Conservatives, was also elected president of the Brandon constituency association in mid 1926. Ibid., July 15, 1926. These men led the Conservative party in Brandon for the next decade (i.e., generation).

Certainly Meighen's meeting was well attended: "about 3500 electors" were present for what the Sun described as "Brandon's greatest public meeting."[59] The impact of his speech was less certain, however. Whereas Mackenzie King would purposely (and effectively) be somewhat vague, Meighen was precise. The Hudson's Bay Railway would be completed if "the completion cost is under ten million...."[60] In this traditionally free trade farming district, the Prime Minister declared: "We will put the tariff right up brick for brick with the United States so that they will find it hard to roll their agricultural surplus in on us."[61] On the issue of the Customs Scandal, Meighen stated emphatically that the Progressives and the Liberals must be viewed as one: "I have never known Mr. Forke to take a step in parliament except to aid the King government and to make his own party an annex of the Liberal machine."[62]

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[57] QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. 111, box 102, R. Forke to Crerar, August 29, 1926

[58] Brandon Daily Sun, August, 21, 1926

[59] Ibid., August 12, 1926. Meighen's meeting was held a week prior to that of Mackenzie King's.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., Forke had actually condemned the scandal but he felt that the "wrong doing" may have been occurring for years. He also argued that the Conservative's high tariff policy and their opposition to the Crow's Nest Pass Rates Agreement were the really important issues. Ibid., July 28, 1926

Had Arthur Meighen provided his audience only with vague generalties and had he allowed them to interpret this material in any manner in which they wished, more voters might, as a result, have supported David W. Beaubier in the hope that their expectations would be fulfilled. That, however, was never to be Arthur Meighen's political style.

The Sun fought valiantly on the Conservative candidate's behalf. Beaubier, unlike Forke, was a resident of the city and the voters were exhorted to elect "A Brandon Man For Brandon."[63] Forke, the Sun argued, had failed both the city and the constituency at large:

> The late member for this constituency has been so involved in intrigues and quarreling among his own and other political parties at Ottawa that he has never been able to consider the value to us of the interests of Brandon. He has done little or nothing for the city or the constituency.[64]

This old argument that a member of a third party could do nothing for his constituency was probably of little consequence in 1926 as Forke was now the nominee both of the Progressives and the Liberals. However, Beaubier did do even better in the city than he had in 1925: in fact, he won every city poll. Nevertheless, most of the voters in the federal riding of Brandon resided outside of the city boundary and it was these farm voters[65] who re-elected Robert Forke in 1926 by the increased margin of 8,267 to 7,101.

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[63] Ibid., September 13, 1926

[64] Ibid.

[65] David Beaubier later stated about 1926: "But for the attitude of the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen on the Crow's Nest Pass rate agreement, I would have won. I did not mind his rather weak stand on the Hudson Bay Railway--anyway I was never in favour of it...." PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306623, D. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934

Politicians and political observers traditionally are post-election experts! However, T.A. Crerar had foreseen the Liberal victory in advance. The Tories, he maintained, had achieved their maximum potential in 1925, due to their vastly superior campaign organization. The Liberals, on the other hand, had been poorly prepared for the 1925 contest and they stood to improve a great deal, especially if they should receive additional Progressive support.[66] The national Progressive vote did decline in 1926 from 282,152 to 171,516 and the Liberal vote was increased from 1,256,824 to 1,500,302. As the Conservative total was increased by only 9,000 votes, the greatest shift was apparently from the Progressives to the Liberals in 1926.[67] Therefore, Crerar's forecast was, indeed, accurate.

What, however, would explain why the majority of Brandon electors voted Conservative in 1926 while the Liberals and Progressives together were sweeping the province of Manitoba, with even Prime Minister Meighen going down to defeat in Portage la Prairie.[68] Brandon voters in municipal and provincial elections had frequently preferred to vote for "the man" rather than for the party and this was probably the case, to some degree, in 1926 when the choice was between a city resident and a rural representative. Secondly, the Conservative party's appeal in 1926 was presumably greater in urban areas than it was rurally due to its clearly enunciated support for protective tariffs.[69] International markets for farm produce seemed threatened by a protective tariff policy, while urban workers (such as railway employees) and businessmen could benefit from tariff protection.

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[66] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, November 3, 1925. It is interesting to note that a prominent political scientist, J. Murray Beck, later concurred in this analysis. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 183. The Conservatives actually polled 9000 more votes across Canada in 1926 than they had in 1925, but the total vote in 1926 exceeded that of 1925 by 103,983 votes.

[67] *Ibid.*, 175, 189

[68] According to John W. Dafoe, the Conservatives expected to win "about twelve seats" in Manitoba and they "had the most profound faith that they were going to beat Mr. Forke in Brandon." PAC, J.S. Willison Papers, folder 86, 7458, Dafoe to J.S. Willison, September 17, 1926

However, the attitude of the press may have been the crucial factor in determining the City of Brandon results in 1926. T.A. Crerar, an unusually perceptive observer, had stated, during the 1925 campaign, that "quite an important factor in the west is that the Tories have no press."[70] Admittedly, the Winnipeg Tribune was sympathetic but it was not a consistent party supporter in the same manner as was, for instance, the Manitoba Free Press. Such newspaper support, Crerar maintained, was vital in 1926: "The Free Press put up a very effective campaign and much of the credit for the result in Manitoba must go to it."[71] Rodmond P. Roblin also believed, as he explained to Meighen, that newspaper attitude had contributed to the Conservative defeat.

> Morning and evening the great papers thunder against the Conservative policy in general and yourself in particular. It does not affect old chaps like myself, but thousands of new voters come in every year...many from foreign lands and if they take a paper they must take a grit one, political poison administered daily without an antidote eventually overcomes them as shown in yesterday's results.... Public

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[69] The Conservatives did win fifty-three of Ontario's eighty-two seats, although they lost ground from 1925. Most losses occurred either in areas with a considerable French-Canadian population or in old "Grit" sections of the province where Liberals and Progressives cooperated together. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 184

[70] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 33, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, September 26, 1925

[71] Ibid., vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, September 15, 1926

> meetings are not as popular as they were twenty-five years ago, too many automobile and pleasure seekers these days and only leaders can get an audience. They take their politics from the newspapers.... It is a waste of money and effort to run conservative candidates without a newspaper in Manitoba.[72]

If Roblin was correct, the style of politics had changed significantly by 1925-26. The medium was becoming an even more vital part of the political process.

What was particularly interesting about the election results in Brandon was that the Conservatives did have newspaper support in this particular constituency. The Brandon Daily Sun was an open supporter of the Conservative party and of its candidate, David W. Beaubier. If newspaper support was as crucial as Roblin and Crerar contended, the attitude of Brandon's daily press may well help explain why Brandon electors continued in 1926 to vote Conservative while much of Manitoba and even of Canada reverted to the Liberal cause. Perhaps the pen is, indeed, mightier than the sword![73]

Regardless of the results in Brandon, Robert Forke, with the support of the Liberal party, had won the constituency and he was subsequently invited to join the Mackenzie King cabinet, a step that would symbolize the consummation of the merger of the Liberals and the Progressives. Although Manitoba Liberals were anxious to receive their appropriate share of credit for the election victory,[74] they did agree to the Progressive leader's appointment: "...if you decide to include Mr. Forke in the cabinet that would be entirely satisfactory to Manitoba."[75] However, those same provincial Liberals argued that Forke's appointment was not to be interpreted as evidence of a coalition between two equal parties "as I look upon all Progressives in Manitoba as having committed themselves to the Liberal party...."[76] Forke, himself, was conscious of the significance of his appointment:

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[72] PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, vol. 144, E104(2), 087993-94, R.P. Roblin to Meighen, September 16, 1926

[73] Other political observers offered their own explanations for the Conservative defeat. Ed Meighen (a relation?) believed that "it was the foreign vote that beat you and I think it was the foreign vote more than the freight rates that beat us all over the Prairies." Ibid., 087970, Ed Meighen to Meighen, September 16, 1926. Certainly, the "foreign vote" would respond more favourably to King's constitutional issue than would the British vote of south-western Manitoba. Yet this would not explain the pro-Conservative vote in Brandon. John T. Haig, a prominent Winnipeg Conservative, noted that labour, which had not voted at all in 1925 in many constituencies, "this time, at the request of Woodsworth, voted solidly against you." Ibid., E104(1), 087636, John T. Haig to Meighen, September 15, 1926. While Haig's comment is extremely interesting, again it does not explain the Conservative strength in Brandon.

> Our Progressive friends seem very much afraid that we will likely lose our Progressive tag at Ottawa. To myself, personally, it is not a very serious matter, so long as we get Progressive legislation from the Liberal Party it will suit me alright...."[77]

Thus, Robert Forke entered the Liberal cabinet as Minister of Immigration within a week of the 1926 election. The re-union of the Progressives with the Liberals was officially proclaimed and Brandon constituency was represented in the federal cabinet--for the first time since early 1905.

Robert Forke was not, however, another Clifford Sifton. He had not been a particularly "strong" leader of the Progressives[78] and T.A. Crerar, with perhaps a tinge of envy at the "success" of his former lieutenant, had reservations about Forke's appointment.

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[74] F.C. Hamilton also was most unhappy that the Saskatchewan Liberal "machine" was being credited for Liberal successes in Manitoba. Thus, he protested to the Secretary of the National Liberal Federation: "...I want to assure you that Saskatchewan had nothing whatever to do with our organization." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 132, 112366, F.C. Hamilton to A. Haydon, September 22, 1926

[75] Ibid., 112159, F.C. Hamilton to King, September 16, 1926

[76] Ibid. Hamilton was vitally concerned about what this re-union would mean at the provincial level where the Progressives were the government and the Liberals were in opposition.

[77] QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. 111, box 107, R. Forke to Crerar, November 22, 1926

> Frankly I could wish that we had a more aggressive man in the cabinet for Manitoba. Mr. Forke has many estimable qualities but even his best friends feel that his vanity can be played upon and appealed to, and the Ottawa environment usually makes the best of such a situation.[79]

Cameron, who as a M.P. presumably knew Forke well, shared Crerar's concerns: "...this [Immigration] is a department which should have a man of courage and imagination, and I am not inclined to think that Mr. Forke possess either one nor the other in large measure."[80] Forke, himself, would "have preferred Agriculture.... Immigration is important enough; but it seems difficult to find a solution on how best to fill our vacant land."[81] Actually, the new Minister may have been aware of his own limitations. After reporting that complimentary banquets were planned to honour his cabinet appointment in Brandon, Elkhorn and Winnipeg, Forke concluded: "Afraid Not Live Up To Expectations."[82] Perhaps the peculiar political circumstances of the day had elevated the former reeve of the R.M. of Pipestone into a more esteemed and responsible public position than his abilities would normally have warranted.

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78. A.B. Hudson, for example, "thinks Forke has very little mind of his own and Progressives are not controlled by him." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 115, 98531, A. Haydon to King, November 23, 1925

79. PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, September 23, 1926

80. Ibid., A.K. Cameron to Crerar, September 29, 1926

81. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. 111, box 107, R. Forke to Crerar, September 22, 1926

82. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 131, 111528, R. Forke to King, October 5, 1926

Although economic conditions remained relatively unchanged in Brandon in 1926,[83] the city's municipal politics were markedly different as there was a return both to "citizen politics"[84] and contested mayoralty elections. Neither had been present in the city since 1922.[85] Although the city continued to carry a heavy debt load and although its municipally owned street railway system was still incurring sizable annual losses, the renewal of interest in civic politics cannot be attributed to those factors. In fact, neither "problem" was of much concern to public opinion.[86] Instead, Mayor Harry Cater had himself become the principal issue in Brandon's municipal life by 1926. This situation had been "in the making" for several years: the boiling point stage had finally been reached.

While conflicts between Cater and other civic authorities remained as relatively miniscule in themselves, the incidents became more numerous in 1926. For instance, the local police chief resigned his position in protest against Cater's "continually interfering with...the force,"[87] while the city manager (with the support of council) and the mayor struggled publicly to determine whether the city manager should retain the power to dismiss civic employees.[88] However, despite an unprecedented expression of public opposition[89] in 1926 and a determined campaign to convince the voters that "it was time for a change,"[90] Harry Cater won a relatively easy re-election.[91] The incumbent mayor's emphasis on civic economy and low taxation had won him support in all sectors of the city--except the central business area.[92] Thus, Harry Cater--who did not lack for critics[93]--was clearly in step with the masses in 1926. It was a secure place to be!

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[83] While the city's population had again levelled off (i.e., it had increased by only 400 since 1923) at approximately 16,800 (Brandon Daily Sun, February 4, 1926), jobs were still plentiful. In fact, the pace of railway construction was slowed in August when labourers left for the more renumerative harvest positions. Ibid., August 27, 1926

[84] The Independent Labor Party did not participate in the 1926 municipal election but two "labour" type candidates ran successfully for the school board. William Henry Marlott, who had previously been defeated as an aldermanic candidate, was a C.P.R. shopman. Robert John Bullard was a C.P.R. blacksmith. Ibid., November 16, 1926

[85] Admittedly, a Greater Brandon Citizens' Committee had been formed to oppose the Canada Gas and Electric Company bid in 1925, but that organization had not participated in that year's mayoralty election.

[86] Although the total estimated losses incurred by this municipally owned system was a half million dollars by 1926, there is little evidence to indicate that the public shared the Sun's concerns. The Sun itself was more concerned with the principle of municipal ownership than the losses themselves: in fact the losses were "the penalty of the people's ownership." Brandon Daily Sun, May 17, 1926

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[87] Ibid., February 18, 1926

[88] Cater's conflict with the city manager became more and more constant with the passage of time. While the city manager may have personified efficiency, the mayor was the symbol of democratic authority and, thus, Cater stood to gain politically as a result of this conflict.

[89] That is to say that one thousand Brandonites petitioned Alderman Dr. H.O. McDiarmid to oppose Cater in 1926 and a Citizens' Committee was organized to support McDiarmid in that campaign. Brandon Daily Sun, November 18, 1926

[90] McDiarmid, who stressed the need for civic harmony and the provision of improved public services (such as sewer connections) in the city's north end, argued that "it is not in the interest of any City...that the same man should expect to be at the head of our civic administration year after year...." Ibid., November 18, 1926. McDiarmid's charge that Cater had failed "to sell" Brandon was presumably directed at the local businessmen who were disappointed by the evident decline in the city's growth rate.

[91] The Citizens' Campaign Committee did support three aldermanic candidates as part of the "It's Time for a Change" campaign. All three candidates were elected: in fact, they placed first, second and fourth. Therefore, this type of appeal could be effective in municipal politics if the strong personal strength of a Harry Cater was not part of the political picture.

Ironically, Cater's success in 1926 proved to be extremely short-lived. The mayor had inadvertently violated the Municipal Act during the course of the campaign[94] and his subsequent resignation necessitated two by-elections in February 1927. As Cater had no difficulty in defeating his challenger, Alderman H.L. Patmore,[95] the most interesting contest was at the aldermanic level[96] where William Hill, a railway employee, won election as an Independent Labor Party candidate--the

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92. J. Donnelly, who was elected alderman of Brandon in 1928 and who was a determined opponent of Harry Cater, believed that Cater's emphasis on civic economy and low taxation was particularly important with the many farmers who "retired" to Brandon. Many of these retired farmers resided in ward five where Cater normally did quite well.

93. It has been suggested earlier in this chapter that the Brandon Daily Sun had been of considerable influence in the 1926 federal election. Could it be that the electors were more prepared to accept guidance in the area of federal politics than they were in municipal affairs where they perhaps believed themselves to be more adequately informed?

94. Cater had rented advertising space on the municipally-owned street railway system. Members of council were prohibited from entering into any business transaction with the city. Brandon Daily Sun, November 27, 1926

95. Cater again stressed the need for civic economy, lower taxes and a reduction in the municipal debt while Brandon's nationally known horticulturist campaigned on a slogan of "Unity, Sanity and Progress." Cater, Patmore alleged, "was not the same man that he once was--...Mr. Cater has caused division in the city, he has become the leader of a faction." Ibid., January 28, 1927. Cater, however, won re-election by a vote of 2178 to 998. While Cater's support had remained constant, Patmore polled about 500 fewer votes than Dr. McDiarmid had a few short months before. Ibid., February 2, 1927

96. The aldermanic by-election was necessitated by Alderman Patmore's decision to resign his seat in order to contest the mayoralty election.

first such candidate to seek election in Brandon. This emergence of the Independent Labor Party marked the beginning of the revival of "labour" as a political force in Brandon[97]--a force that would be significant at both the municipal and provincial levels for some years to come.

Whether Mayor Cater and I.L.P. Alderman Hill foresaw the possibility of "using" their municipal victories in February 1927 as the "pad" from which they could "launch" a bid for election to the provincial legislature cannot be determined. Nevertheless, the fact that both Hill, an I.L.P. candidate, and Cater, an Independant, did stand for election at two "levels" of politics in 1927 provides an excellent opportunity to assess the interrelationship that existed in politics in Brandon at that time and particularly to determine whether or not political support was transferable from one level of politics to another.

However, the 1927 provincial election in Manitoba, the Brandon constituency included, was "complicated" by the various party groupings that were the order of the day and the results, therefore, could not be interpreted in simplistic terms. For example, while the Liberals and the Progressives had essentially united together in Manitoba in the 1926 federal election, provincial Liberals (with the encouragement of

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[97] Hill polled 1681 votes in February 1927, a total that was comparable to labour's "core" strength in the late war and post-war years. Alderman Grantham, for instance, used to receive approximately 1,500 votes, but this total exceeded that of most "labour" candidates. The city's population had increased from the 1918 low of 14,012 to the 1926 total of 16,880. There were also 25 trade union branches in Brandon in 1926: 20 of those 25 branches had a reported membership of 815. *Brandon Daily Sun*, June 4, 1926. One could assume, therefore that labour's "core" had increased somewhat in size as well.

J.G. Gardiner[98] and in spite of the arguments of T.A. Crerar) decided in 1927 to oppose the Progressives and especially those whom they believed to be merely "disguised" Tories.[99] While Liberals, Progressives and Conservatives thus engaged in multiple combat in several constituencies in 1927, politics in Brandon was somewhat more simplified by the fact that local Liberals and Conservatives[100] continued to unite in their support of Dr. J.H. Edmison, the incumbent Independent. Nevertheless, the nomination of Hill, the I.L.P. candidate, and of Cater, an Independent who described himself as a Bracken supporter,[101] ensured that Brandon politics in 1927 was reasonably complex--if not confused!

Dr. Edmison's main appeal in 1927 was based upon the fact that he had served his constituency successfully and in a non-partisan fashion. For example, he had supported Bracken's "Farmer" government in most instances: however, he had opposed government proposals for a provincial income tax and a compulsory wheat pool.[102] On the other hand, he claimed that he had voted more frequently with the I.L.P. M.L.A.'s that he had with either the Liberals or the Conservatives--a claim that presumably reflected the fact that "labour" was his principal opposition in 1927![103] While Dr. Edmison freely admitted that he was not a renowned orator,[104] the incumbent M.L.A. claimed that his constituency had benefitted directly as a result of his representation. Paid holidays for the mental hospital staff[105] and the construction of a new $30,000 fair building in Brandon[106] would hopefully be valued more highly than polished oratory by his constituents!

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[98] Gardiner was a strong advocate of fighting the Progressives at every step. However, he frequently complained about his lack of influence with Manitoba Liberals: "Every time I go to Winnipeg I get more proof of the fact Regina influence with Manitoba Liberals is being undermined from Ottawa." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 152, 129730, J.G. Gardiner to King, January 17, 1928

[99] Thus, Bracken too was opposed by the Robson Liberals. PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, July 4, 1927

[100] The Progressives were not a factor in this urban constituency.

[101] Ivens and Woodsworth were careful to point out that Cater was not a real member of the Bracken team. They obviously believed that the identification with Bracken could be politically advantageous for Cater. Brandon Daily Sun, June 25, 1927

[102] *Ibid.*, May 13, 1927

Although Alderman Hill was not as personally attractive as A.E. Smith, this local railwayman had polled 1,600 plus votes in the February 1927 by-election and he did have the active support of two well known "labourites"--William Ivens, M.L.A. and J.S. Woodsworth, M.P.--in this campaign. Hill's appeal was aimed directly at the city's "working class" vote as he advocated pro-labour measures such as collective bargaining, workmen's compensation, the right to picket, one day's rest in seven, the public ownership of all utilities, and public control over natural resources.[107]

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[103] Edmison, during the campaign, also took the precaution of securing the support of "labour men," such as Frank E. Carey, to speak on his behalf. Carey stressed that Hill was not a local trades union candidate, but he was an I.L.P. candidate "with headquarters in Winnipeg and branch in Brandon." Ibid., June 25, 1927. Hill, it should be noted, was bitterly critical of this Edmison tactic (i.e., searching for "labour men" to attack him) which suggests that this political maneuvre probably was effective. Ibid.

[104] "'I don't waste any of your money down there making speaches' said Dr. Edmison. He had regretted when he first went down to the legislature that he couldn't speak better, but after sitting in for a while, came to the conclusion that more speakers talked themselves 'out' of propositions, than 'in' to them." Ibid., May 13, 1927

[105] A gain which he had allegedly secured without the support of the I.L.P. M.L.A's.

[106] Brandon Daily Sun, June 25, 1927

[107] Ibid., June 10, 1927

Mayor Cater, on the other hand, seemingly sought election on the strength of his personal popularity. Admittedly, he did attempt to identify himself as a Bracken or government candidate but he made little overt attempt to campaign for support. Perhaps he believed that the 2,178 votes which he had received in the recent mayoralty by-election would ensure his success in provincial politics. If that was the case, he was surely disappointed by the results!

Brandon voters were quite decisive in their 1927 decision as Dr. Edmison won a rather easy re-election over his two challengers. In fact, Edmison's total vote of 3,526 was an approximate increase of 250 over his 1922 total while Hill's 1,288 votes reinforces the suggestion that he was less personally popular than A.E. Smith, the ex-Labor M.L.A. had been. Hill, however, had polled 76.6% of his February "aldermanic vote," a feat which Mayor Cater noticeably failed to equal. In fact, Cater's rather dismal total of 489 compared so miserably with his February mayoralty vote of 2,178 that one can only reach one of two possible conclusions. Either political support at the municipal level simply is not automatically transferable to a "higher" level of politics or Cater may have suffered politically in 1927 from the fact that both he and Hill, the I.L.P. nominee, were appealing to essentially the same sector of the community for support.[108] In any event, the late 1920s were good years economically--perhaps too good for "labour"[109]--and a combination of that relative prosperity and Dr. J.H. Edmison's personal popularity[110] evidently secured the easy re-election of the "Fusionist" or "Independent" incumbent. Brandon Liberals and Conservatives had "fused" in 1922 to defeat A.E. Smith, their common enemy. Dr. J.H. Edmison's personal appeal, five years later, was apparently sufficient to forestall a restoration in Brandon of the traditional inter-party warfare that was again prevalent throughout much of the province.[111] Thus, the coalition locally remained intact.

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[108] Brandon voters cast a preferential ballot for the first time in 1927 but, regretfully, the fact that Dr. Edmison received a majority of the first preferences meant that second preferences were not examined. Therefore, how many Cater supporters preferred Hill as a second choice (or vice-versa) cannot be determined.

The fact that Brandon's most successful mayor had suffered a crushing defeat in this provincial election did not dampen that man's ardour for ensuing municipal contests. If anything, Harry Cater became more aggressive in the months to follow as he clashed publicly with the Salvation Army,[112] the city manager and the Brandon Sun. By attacking these non-elected bodies, Cater may well have intended to

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109. The fact that Edmison did surprisingly well in the east end of the city suggests that the labour vote itself responded favourably to the "good times." Brandon Daily Sun, June 25, 1927. It also suggests that some labour supporters may have been worried by the I.L.P. label.

110. Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

111. The fact that neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives seemed to be on the verge of power in 1927 would enable local partisans to forego the opportunity to win the Brandon seat for themselves.

112. The Salvation Army operated a hostel for the elderly and, in addition, it administered a program of personal relief assistance on behalf of the city. However, it had been alleged that there were serious discrepancies in the manner in which such personal assistance had been provided and Cater, as a result, refused to approve the payment of civic funds owed to the Salvation Army. Brandon Daily Sun, October 20, 1927

present himself as the personification of the people whose interests were theoretically threatened by non-representative bodies. In fact, his claim that the 1927 mayoralty contest was a case of "the People versus the Sun"[113] implied that this was a case of the popular will versus the vested interests.[114] His opponent and a member of one of Brandon's most prominent families, D.E. Clement, could easily be viewed as part of a local "establishment"[115] and, thus, as an enemy of the people.

The November 1927 mayoralty election was significant as it constituted the most determined challenge to Harry Cater in that decade of his personal domination of municipal politics.[116] The 1927 municipal election was also significant as it featured a continued accelerated rate of political activity by the I.L.P. That party had elected William Hill in the February aldermanic by-election. They then proceeded to field two aldermanic candidates for the regular autumn municipal election and both Harry Spafford, a locomotive engineer, and H. Roy Davis, a railway conductor, were successful.[117] Thus, the I.L.P. had, within the space of a few months, captured three of the ten seats on city council. In fact, this rather dramatic resurgence (as the I.L.P.'s predecessor--the Dominion Labor Party--had been inactive municipally since 1922) may have constituted a turning point as the politics of the individual started to give way to the politics of the organizations at the municipal level.[118]

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[113] Ibid., November 14, 1927. The Sun, for its part, would reply that the election was that of "the mayor versus Brandon." Ibid. The election results would seem to indicate that Harry Cater had the most effective slogan!

[114] Cater, however, may well have suffered politically in 1927 as a result of the public rebuke administered to him by Justice Curran. Cater's excessive use of the power of mayoralty veto had been challenged by Alderman Ed Fotheringham (the man who would eventually defeat him in 1931) in the courts and Justice Curran's reprimand which followed may have encouraged his critics to push their campaign more strenuously.

[115] David E. Clement had lived in Brandon since 1882 (except for periods of study) and he had served Brandon as a pharmacist since 1901. Clement was also active in numerous community organizations such as the Board of Trade, the church, the Provincial Exhibition Board, the Good Roads Association, the Shooting Club, and the Golf and Country Club. His brother, Judge (as of early 1927) S.E. Clement, was the former Liberal M.L.A. for Brandon.

[116] While Cater received 2,006 votes in 1927, only 12 less than 1926, D.E. Clement received 1,857 votes, 400 more than Dr. McDiarmid in 1926 and over 800 more than Alderman Patmore's total in the February by-election. The anti-Cater forces, who had obviously made a most determined effort to win, had, at least, reduced Cater's majority to its lowest point since his own victory over Mayor Dinsdale in 1921. In fact, Cater's 1927 majority was the smallest between his victory in 1921 and his defeat by Ed Fotheringham in 1931.

Furthermore, one suspects that the success of the I.L.P. municipally in 1927 led to the formation of the Young Citizens'

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[117] Spafford, who was launching what would prove to be a most remarkable municipal political career, placed second in a field of seven with 2,178 votes. Davis, with 2,126 votes, was third. Brandon Daily Sun, November 15, 1927. The marked similarity in vote for Spafford and Davis causes one to wonder whether or not labour supporters were now "plumping" for these two men--a practice which a 1926 amendment permitting electors to vote for "up to five" candidates had facilitated.

[118] Ironically, the re-emergence of "labour" as a political force at the municipal level may have contributed to the defeat of Alderman George Dinsdale, one of Brandon's more prominent politicians. Dinsdale, an ex-mayor (and a future M.L.A.), had traditionally made an open appeal for labour's support. However, in 1927, Dinsdale, with only 1,614 votes, trailed badly in that aldermanic field of seven (as the sixth place man polled 2,028 votes) and one suspects that his reduced appeal may have been due to the appearance of more genuine "labourites." It may also have been caused by Harry Cater's well publicized attack on the role of the Salvation Army in the administration of the city's relief program as Dinsdale was a prominent Salvation Armyist. Dinsdale denied that he had any connection "with the section of the Army that has under its control the relief function." Ibid., October 4, 1927. Those denials, however, were probably made in vain.

League that same year. While the latter body was allegedly representative of all sectors of the Brandon community (i.e., "working men, professional men, salaried employees, railwaymen and heads of many businesses"[119]), its leadership consisted essentially of Young Conservatives such as H.A. McNeill, John Allen and C.C. Mitchell.[120] Although the Young Citizens' League contended that its primary purpose was to commemorate Canada's 60th anniversary, "to boost" Brandon and to educate the public of the need for a greater interest in civic affairs,[121] it did nominate and support F.R. Longworth, a young businessman and the president of the local Young Conservatives, to oppose I.L.P. nominee, William Bain (a local postal clerk), when another aldermanic by-election occurred in July 1928. However, the political conditions remained ideal for the I.L.P. as only one-third of the eligible voters went to the polls, and, as a result, labour's "core" strength was sufficient to elect Bain over Longworth by a vote of 1137 to 998, despite the efforts of the Young Citizens' League which did, at least, result in an overwhelming vote of 338 to 101 for Longworth in his own poll.[122] There were now four I.L.P. aldermen on city council!

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[119] Ibid., July 11, 1928

[120] J.H. Donnelly, a local car dealer, was also an active member of the Young Citizens' League. Donnelly, however, described himself "mostly" as a Liberal. Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

[121] Brandon Daily Sun, July 11, 1928

[122] Ibid., July 18, 1928. There was a large vote in the last hour in the north and east end polls. The I.L.P. organization probably ensured their victory as a result.

"Labour's" strength on council was subsequently reduced in the regular 1928 elections—for several reasons. A key factor in the defeat of Alderman Hill by F.R. Longworth (who was making his second bid for election in four months) was the increased response at the polls. Thus, while Longworth had polled only 998 votes in July 1928, he now defeated Hill (in a contest for a one year aldermanic post) by a vote of 1,936 to 1,857. Hill also may have personally suffered from the fact that, in the opinion of a contemporary, he was more "Red" than were other I.L.P. candidates.[123]

The significance of the appeal of the candidate as an individual was evident in 1928 in other instances as well. For example, the third I.L.P. nominee, Russell Mummery,[124] trailed his two fellow party representatives quite badly with just 1,250 votes while B.L. Patterson, a C.P.R. ticket agent but never an I.L.P. member, led this field of I.L.P. and Young Citizens' League candidates by a considerable margin.[125] The personal appeal of Harry Cater continued to be very evident as he rather easily defeated ex-Alderman Harry Young, the candidate who presumably enjoyed the support of the Young Citizens' League and the man who had led the aldermanic polls in 1927,[126] in spite of the fact that several hundred potential Cater supporters had been disfranchised due to the fact that they were not British subjects, either by birth or by naturalization.[127] Therefore, the political effectiveness of the organizations was significant--but limited--in 1928.

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[123] Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

[124] Mummery was a C.P.R. machinist. The railway influence was certainly evident in Brandon politics in 1928.

[125] While J.H. Donnelly later contended that Bert Patterson was part of "their group" in 1928, there is no other evidence to indicate that B.L. Patterson was a Young Citizens' League candidate.

[126] Cater's vote of 2,267 was slightly above his "average" while Young's total of 1,687 was slightly reduced from D.E. Clement's vote in 1927.

Actually, the municipal strength of the I.L.P. (which constituted the most easily identifiable political organization at that moment) had seemingly "peaked" by 1928 as ex-Alderman Hill failed in 1929 to win re-election to city council, both in another by-election and in the annual November election.[128] Although I.L.P. Alderman Spafford and Davis were successfully re-elected,[129] the number of I.L.P. aldermen remained at three. Ironically, Hill was defeated in the September by-election by Alexander Bayne Patterson, a C.P.R. engineer.[130] Thus, a "labour" candidate had been nominated to oppose an I.L.P. nominee. Although Hill won a majority of the city polls, a large pro-Patterson "business" vote gave the non-aligned "labourite" the victory by a vote of 1,723 to 1,608.[131]

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[127] One estimate suggested that 700 "north end" names had been deleted while another story suggested that 250 names had been removed by that revision. Brandon Daily Sun, September 3, 1929

[128] The elections were held in October in 1929 in the hope that improved weather conditions would encourage a greater interest in the election. 48% of those eligible to vote did so in 1929--a high percentage in view of the fact that there was no mayoralty contest. Ibid., November 1, 1929

[129] However, the difference of votes in this case was not great. Spafford had received 1798 votes and Davis had polled 1794 votes. Many electors were presumably "plumping" for these two men. Hill, on the other hand, was some 140 votes behind his two colleagues with 1659.

[130] According to J.H. Donnelly, A.B. Patterson was part of the same group of which Donnelly and F.R. Longworth were leaders. Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973. Thus, the attempts of the Young Citizens' League to halt the progress of the I.L.P. were becoming quite successful.

That the political appeal of the individual candidates clearly remained as a significant--if not predominant--force in municipal politics was most evident as this decade drew to a close. For example, the fact that certain I.L.P. aldermen could win re-election in 1928-29 while ex-Alderman William Hill was repeatedly rejected by the voters confirms that a party label in itself was insufficient to secure political success. Secondly, Harry Cater's personal political strength, which had been another notable feature of this political era, remained as the predominant factor of municipal politics in Brandon in 1929 as he again won re-election by acclamation. Admittedly, Mayor Cater had been clearly "in step" with public opinion as he strenuously campaigned in support of a Manitoba Hydro proposal[132] and for the abolition of the post of city manager.[133] Thus, while the I.L.P. could claim a core support of some 1,600-1,800 throughout the 1920s and while groups such as the Young Citizens' League could

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131. Brandon Daily Sun, September 20, 1929. The by-election and the Hydro referendum were held on the same day.

132. This Manitoba Hydro proposal was endorsed by the Brandon electors by the overwhelming vote of 2,387 to 920. Ibid.

133. Fawkes, Brandon's first city manager, had resigned in 1929 and Cater (who had been Fawkes's constant critic) immediately launched a campaign in favour of the abolition of the position. The continuity provided by experienced municipal politicians, the shortage of qualified candidates, the financial savings that would result, and the undesirability of such non-elected officials exercising real power were all cited as reasons to support such an abolition. Ibid., January 2, 1929. Later, during that same year, council seemed to be on the verge of over-ruling Mayor Cater on this issue: they hesitated, however, when they were confronted by 940 objecting petitioners whose collective response had presumably been organized by the Independent Labor Party. Ibid., December 17, 1929

occasionally "top" that I.L.P. vote by effective organization, the decade really belonged to Mayor Cater and his unswerving 2,000-2,200 supporters. Although Cater had been unable to transfer his municipal strength to the provincial level, it was evident that Harry Cater--the individual--"owned" City Hall in 1929, as he had done since 1921.

Robert Forke, on the other hand, seemingly owed less of his success to his personal political appeal than to the support of the parties which he represented. Forke, who was not regarded by observers to be a particularly strong individual, had been quite disturbed by the differences that had arisen in the 1927 provincial election between the Liberals and the Progressives[134] as he, himself, had won in 1926 with the support of both bodies. Consequently, while Forke reported that both Progressives and Liberals were still friendly to him,[135] he would not endanger that alliance by campaigning in a provincial by-election in 1927. Robert Forke, for one, wanted to keep provincial and federal politics totally distinct from each other.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, made no apparent distinction between their provincial and federal organization in Manitoba. In fact, they were one and the same and they became increasingly stronger after the 1927 leadership convention at which R.B. Bennett (presumably with

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134. "I am afraid the activities of the parties engaged in the Provincial election, have created a situation, that requires careful consideration, if it is not to have an unfavorable re-action [sic] on the Dominion situation. The Liberals or rather a section of the party seems to have been more anxious to defeat Bracken than to defeat Conservative candidates...some of the Progressives feel sore over the action of the official Liberal party...." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 143, 121506, R. Forke to King, August 20, 1927

135. "I have had a warm welcome from all of my friends in Brandon Liberal and Progressive." Ibid.

Brandon support[136]) had been elected. For example, while the party's Manitoba organization was reportedly "in a deplorable state"[137] in 1928, that picture had changed greatly by 1929. First of all, a portion of R.B. Bennett's personal wealth had been made available to the party and the Manitoba organization benefitted to some degree as a result.[138] Secondly, developments elsewhere had a beneficial effect upon Manitoba Tories--in the opinion of one Liberal "source."[139]

> The apparent victory in Saskatchewan has had a wonderfully stimulating affect upon the Conservative party. They are up and working and ready to fight. General McRae [the provincial Conservative organizer] has the leaders from all parts of the Province meet him in Winnipeg and they have a real organization under way.... McRae is a worker, and the effect of this organization must not be minimized, as it is very real and dangerous.[140]

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136. E.C. Whitehead as a member of the National Organization Committee, David W. Beaubier as a defeated candidate, and N.W. Kerr as a constituency representative were voting delegates. F.R. Longworth of the Young Conservatives and Mrs. A.P. Jeffery were alternates. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 30, E16637. The proportion of male to female delegates is probably indicative of their relative position within party affairs. The Manitoba delegation reportedly supported Robert Rogers, as a favourite son candidate, on the first ballot. On the second ballot, they were "practically unanimous" for R.B. Bennett, who was, of course, also a "westerner." Brandon Daily Sun, October 14, 1927

137. "A few picnics have been held, a fairly good provincial association exists and there the story ends." PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 31, 17522, Dr. M.R. Blake to Bennett, March 20, 1928

138. Bennett was donating $2500 a month to the party and he made an additional gift of $10,000 in late 1929. Manitoba's share, for the first ten months of 1929, was $2,333.32 while Quebec, for example, received $38,000.00 during this same period. Ibid., 17522, 17543

139. Dr. Bissett, a Manitoba doctor-politician, travelled extensively throughout the province in 1929, ostensibly to visit his medical friends while on a personal vacation. In actuality, he was sampling public opinion for the Liberal party.

140. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 119, Dr. E.D.R. Bissett to King, August 22, 1929

While Conservatives confidently prepared for the next election, the Mackenzie King government attempted to strengthen its own position in preparation for that contest. One of the proposals was that T.A. Crerar would return to politics as a member of King's cabinet--and as a successor to Robert Forke who would be appointed to the Senate. Dr. Bissett, the Liberal's travelling fact-finder, spent two days in the Brandon riding in 1929 in order to "test" this proposal and he was troubled by the results. Although he agreed that "Crerar would be a source of great strength, and to have the farmers of Western Canada know that the next budget was to be drawn up with Crerar's assistance and advice would have a wholesome and beneficial affect,"[141] he rejected the frequently expressed opinion that Forke was "in trouble."[142] Instead, the three leading men in the constituency--"Dave Mellish, head of the Manitoba Union of Municipalities, Dr. Clingam [sic], former M.L.A. for Virden, and J. Brakey, M.L.A. Souris"[143]--were of the opinion that Forke was still the best possible Liberal candidate. Thus, Bissett concluded:

> ...there is no question about it--Mr. Forke is the best candidate we could possible [sic] have, and we are going to have a real fight on our hands in Brandon at that. Our job from now on is to boost Mr. Forke's stock at home and in Ottawa and keep boosting--
>
> I realize that this may mean Crerar not coming to Ottawa, but much as he undoubtedly would strengthen us there we must have Mr. Forke to run in Brandon or we will most certainly lose that seat.[144]

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[141] Ibid.

[142] "I was given to understand that Hon. Robert Forke was losing out in Brandon--that I found not to be a fact." Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

Events would later prove Dr. Bissett to be an accurate prophet!

Certainly, as Bissett contended, the "Tories" were "stronger" in 1929. The Young Conservative Club had continued to be active (both in partisan politics and in the ostensibly non-partisan Young Citizens' League). In fact, the secretary treasurer of the Manitoba Conservative Association had especially noted their efforts in a report to R.B. Bennett, the party's national leader.

> It was the Young Men's Club of Griswold, Oak Lake and Rivers who were responsible to a great extent for the cutting down of the Liberal majority in Lansdowne.
>
> The Young Men's Conservative Association of Brandon are practically in charge of arrangements for the Provincial Convention at Brandon.[145]

One of their members was even reported to be the most likely Conservative candidate in the next federal election.

> They [the Tories] have a coming candidate in the person of a Brandon man by the name of Kerr, a lawyer; personally a very fine chap; one of the big men in the Brandon fair; head of the Kiwanian Club and an outstanding citizen in every way. He is spending a lot of time in the rural part of the constituency and I was greatly impressed with his possibilities as an opponent.[146]

While Bissett's reports did not dissuade the Prime Minister from proceeding with the plan to replace Forke with Crerar, Mackenzie King, Charles Dunning, Senator Andrew Haydon and Crerar (i.e., the chief strategists) did decide to survey the Brandon constituency to determine whether Crerar, as the rather prestigious Minister of Railways and

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[145] PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 38, 2215, Charles J. Drake to Bennett, May 31, 1929. A rather unusual feature of this particular convention was that C.K.X. broadcast the convention banquet proceedings live to its listeners. That was presumably the first (and perhaps the last) time!

[146] QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 119, Dr. E.D.R. Bissett to King, August 22, 1929

Canals, could win a by-election. Crerar immediately met with a delegation of Brandon Liberals to discuss the proposal:

> ...that you [King] had invited me to go in to the Government as Minister of Railways and Canals; that Mr. Forke had expressed a wish to take the Senate appointment and that it was proposed to do this and open Brandon seat, if we were certain it could be carried in an election.... While they naturally wished a little time to think it over, they said at once that the appointment as Minister of Railways and Canals would make a strong appeal to Brandon City, which is a very important part of the constituency.[147]

The Brandon Liberals immediately returned to Brandon to conduct the "survey." Those results were, Crerar subsequently reported, satisfactory.[148]

There was, however, one difficulty. Crerar had been a longtime advocate of the "fusion" of the Progressives and the Liberals and he was most anxious that this re-union should be completed before he re-entered politics. Although the provincial Liberals had made definite moves in that direction in 1929,[149] Crerar complained in late November that "Robson has intimated to Bracken that he does not intend to go any further in the direction of bringing his supporters and Bracken's supporters closer together."[150] Crerar suggested, therefore, that

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[147] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 160, 136737-38, Crerar to King, November 30, 1929

[148] "We are satisfied with survey constituency." Ibid., 136733, Crerar to C. Dunning, November 28, 1929

[149] Even H.A. Robson and J.G. Gardiner had presumably agreed with the desirability of such a merger and six hundred dollars had been made available to transport "pro-fusion" youth delegates to the Winnipeg convention that was to consider this proposal in 1929. Ibid., vol. 162, 138036, Thomas Taylor to Andrew Haydon, March 18, 1929. Whether the Brandon delegates supported fusion, as the strategists anticipated, is not known.

[150] Ibid., vol. 160, 136739, Crerar to King, December 18, 1929

Robson should immediately be appointed to the bench: "...I would prefer that this be attended to before I am sworn...."[151]

Crerar, consequently, may well have questioned the extent of his political influence with Mackenzie King in late 1929. Firstly, Robson was not appointed to the bench (until 1931) and then--without warning--there came the suggestion that Crerar should accept a less prestigious cabinet post.

> Following from Premier.[152] Am prepared appoint Forke to Senate and you at [same] time to Government provided you are agreeable to accepting his portfolio and leaving open railways until Minister Justice returns from England.[153]

While Crerar recognized that Quebec M.P.'s might well be disturbed by the prospect of two major portfolios (Finance and Railways) being held by Westerners, the ex-Progressive leader would not consider Forke's Immigration department as an alternative.

> For Prime Minister.... As understood from you, my discussion with Brandon and other friends has all been on basis Railway Portfolio and if any change from this made would be obliged reconsider acceptance.[154]

Crerar, it appeared, would enter King's cabinet as Minister of Railways and Canals or he would not enter at all.

However, this "crisis" passed quietly when King, honestly or otherwise, replied that he had considered the appointment of Crerar

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151. Ibid., 136750, Crerar to King, December 18, 1929

152. Telegrams between King and Crerar were frequently sent "through" Charles Dunning as King and Crerar had not yet arranged for a "code" to be used.

153. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 119, C. Dunning to Crerar, November 28, 1929

154. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 160, 136734, Crerar to C. Dunning, November 29, 1929

as Immigration Minister solely to be a temporary provision until Lapointe's return.[155] Consequently, T.A. Crerar re-entered politics in late 1929 as Minister of Railways and Canals in place of the Hon. Robert Forke who was willingly "promoted" to the Senate.[156]

The "retirement" of Forke marked the end of an era in federal politics in Brandon--the era of the Progressives. Forke, whose political career transcended several stages in the West's political development--from Liberal to Patron, to Progressive, to Liberal (again)--had served the Brandon constituency since 1921 as a private member, as leader of a national party and as a cabinet minister. However, this "well-meaning member,"[157] to use the rather condescending words of the Sun, had never been regarded as a particularly strong representative. Consequently, many observers may have concurred in the conclusion that he "never was a statesman and was one of the weak sisters of the King cabinet."[158] Occasionally individuals with unusual political ability influence the events of their day: Robert Forke's political career, on the other hand, was surely the product of the political forces of his era.

> Fate thrust him into a cabinet position, almost on a bargain basis. In the place to which he went his style of honesty never seemed to fit. His was a queer political career and few men rise so quickly to public heights, even by sagacity or

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[155] Ibid., 136741, King to Crerar, December 3, 1929

[156] "Forke seems well content with the situation. The Prime Minister told him that he need not go unless he wished; and that any time he wanted to come back he would not come back as a private member. If he goes to the Senate of course he would not be coming back in any event. I had a talk with him the other day and he seems satisfied." QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 81, T. Wayling to Crerar, December 17, 1929. Wayling, Crerar's former private secretary, was then a newspaperman.

[157] Brandon Daily Sun, December 31, 1929

[158] Ibid.

> merit. The nicest thing that can be said about Senator Forke is that he always seemed apologetic and uncomfortable in the seats of the mighty to which he had been forced.[159]

However, Robert Forke, the Pipestone farmer, had held his constituency for nine years. That was an accomplishment which his successor could never equal.

T.A. Crerar was extremely cognizant of the difficulties which he would encounter in contesting the Brandon constituency. First of all, he was--to use the words of a later era--a "parachute" candidate.

> There had always been a very strong constituency consciousness in Brandon from the time of Clifford Sifton. I very much doubt if any outsider would carry it in a general election although some who know the constituency well tell me there would be no difficulty in a by-election.[160]

Crerar, the former president of the United Grain Growers Company, had been a strong advocate of the competitive marketing of wheat and he had been notably unethusiastic about the proposed restoration of the Canadian Wheat Board--when he was still leader of the Progressives.[161] This, he feared, could hurt him in the farm community.[162] Finally, the Progressive movement, as a whole, was rapidly disintegrating, a process that had commenced well before Crerar became the candidate. Consequently, a Liberal strategy report warned that

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[159] Ibid.

[160] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, November 23, 1929. Aikins, an outsider, had won the seat in 1911 but Clifford Sifton's support may have been the crucial factor in his election.

[161] W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto 1950), 157-58

[162] However, J.E. Matthews, the president of the Brandon Liberal Association, believed that Crerar could still carry the constituency. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 160, 136735, Crerar to King, November 30, 1929

> ...this [Brandon] will be the hardest seat in Manitoba to hold. Slowly, the Progressive friends of Mr. Forke are realising that he is not only in the Liberal cabinet, but is a Liberal, and more and more of his friends are leaving him and it will require the next election to bring out all the Tory Progressives and the question of his re-election is extremely doubtful.[163]

As Crerar needed to salvage whatever Progressive support remained, he insisted that he be nominated by the Progressives and the Liberals in a joint nominating convention.[164] Therefore, the air of coalition and cooperation was retained to the very end of this political era.

Although the Brandon Conservatives were reportedly eager to oppose Crerar in the pending by-election,[165] the new Minister of Railways and Canals was elected by acclamation in February 1930. Perhaps the Conservatives did not, in the end, find a suitable candidate: at least, David Beaubier, the party's nominee in 1925 and 1926, agreed only with considerable reluctance to stand again when the general election was called later in 1930.[166] There is also the possibility that he and the Conservatives in general preferred to bide their time until that more crucial general election. The political stakes would then be quite worthwhile!

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[163] Ibid., J4 ser. vol. 72, C54705

[164] The fact that Crerar's nomination day was on a bitterly cold January 20, 1930, and that most roads were impassable meant that only sixty people were in attendance. Ibid., J1 ser., vol. 172, 147071, Crerar to King, January 21, 1930

[165] However, the Conservatives' un-named candidate had not yet agreed to stand. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 34, 19603, General A.D. McRae to Bennett, December 21, 1929

[166] Ibid., vol. 491, 306622, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934. Beaubier had lost heavily in the stock market crash. The Depression was already making an impact on politics in Brandon.

While Crerar would, as a Liberal-Progressive, win by acclamation in February 1930, the era of "prosperity, coalition and Cater" was drawing to a close. Ex-Conservatives and ex-Liberals had combined to form the Progressive movement in the post-war years and they had elected an ex-Liberal, Robert Forke, to represent Brandon constituency. The Progressive Forke had, in 1927, joined the Liberal caucus and the Liberal cabinet: those same Liberals had, in turn, "promoted" him to the Senate in 1929. While T.A. Crerar had also been a Progressive in 1921, he too was a Liberal (in all but name) years before his decision to stand for Brandon in the 1930 by-election. The Progressives had disappeared as a separate political force: the Liberals and the Conservatives had re-emerged as the principal and competitive forces in the federal field.

Partisan conflict at the federal level might, in time, have destroyed the Liberal-Conservative coalition that had evolved locally at the provincial level, even if Dr. Edmison, the Independent M.L.A., had not retired from politics. Those two parties had coalesced in 1922 as a result of the success of A.E. Smith and the Dominion Labor Party in 1920 and the provincial candidature of William Hill, the I.L.P. alderman, in 1927 had kept this coalition intact. However, the retirement of Edmison and the renewal of traditional Liberal and Conservative rivalry at the provincial and federal level would, in the near future, prepare the way for the revival of "straight" party politics in Brandon.

The marked success of the Independent Labor Party at the municipal level in the late 1920s had also generated an organized and collective response in the form of the Young Citizens' League. While the League was ostensibly non-partisan, its major objective was to defeat

Independent Labor Party candidates. Whether that "coalition" could remain intact while Liberals and Conservatives struggled for political supremacy at the other two levels and whether it was dependent upon the presence of the Independent Labor Party threat would be determined by the events of the future. It would be an interesting test of the degree of interrelationships that existed within the three levels of politics in the 1930s.

Finally, Mayor Harry Cater ended the period of 1923 to 1929 as he had begun it--in office. In fact, he had "ruled" Brandon, in varying degrees, throughout all those years. Despite the several determined efforts of his opponents, the era of Harry Cater appeared secure as Brandon entered into the years of depression. Perhaps economic hardship would do what mere politicians could not do?

Chapter VII

The Impact of the Great Depression

The Great Depression is a landmark in modern history. Some, like James Gray, recall the 1930s as a crisis which brought out "the best in people." For others, such as many of those interviewed by Barry Broadfoot, that decade was truly the "Ten Lost Years" that they would prefer to forget. Provincial revenues, which had been largely generated by "luxury" spending, were sharply reduced: yet those same provincial governments were faced with pleas for assistance from municipal authorities who, too, found that their relief costs were rapidly accelerating at the very moment that property taxation revenues were declining. While some provincial and municipal governments were "teetering" on the verge of bankruptcy, the governing parties themselves fought for their own political survival--in the face of a hostile public which held government responsible for society's economic failures. While John Bracken, in the words of Talleyrand, "survived" the Depression, both the Anderson government in Saskatchewan and the Brownlee government in Alberta were less fortunate. At the federal level, Mackenzie King in 1930 and R.B. Bennett in 1935 could be listed among the "victims" of these most difficult years. The Depression, like war, was a (economic) holocaust through which few could pass unscathed.

Whether the Depression affected individual communities in the same manner as it did provincial societies and the western region generally is an interesting question. Certainly Brandon was hard hit by the economic impact of the Depression. Local revenues declined, relief costs escalated and the municipal debt became an unbearable burden. Finally, the city's finances were placed under the direction of a provincially appointed "supervisor" and a degree of local autonomy was lost--for the next several years. Local politicians were likewise affected as even the redoubtable Mayor Cater was defeated in 1931 and (after winning re-election in 1933) again in 1937. T.A. Crerar, the newly appointed Minister of Railways and Canals and the newly acclaimed M.P. for Brandon, went down in defeat in Brandon in the 1930 election, despite the obvious prestige of the office which he held. However, in 1935--in the face of the total defeat of the Bennett Conservatives elsewhere in the province--David W. Beaubier, a well-known hotel keeper, survived, a rather remarkable achievement in itself. Interestingly, Brandon was also represented at the provincial level by a Conservative throughout most of the 1930s as George Dinsdale, a former civic leader and a well-known businessman, succeeded the Independent Edmison in 1932 and successfully withstood all challenges until his death in late 1943. As the Independent Labor Party, which had made such marked gains in the buoyant 1920s, actually lost "political ground" during this next decade, one wonders whether the 1930s, for some unknown reason, were actually good years for the Tories in Brandon. As this was not the case elsewhere, the question remains as to why Brandon--which had been voting primarily "in step" with the "ministerialist" party--should, suddenly, begin to act in such a seemingly independent manner.

One of the interesting features of the 1930 general election was the fact that the fifty-four year old Crerar, an "outsider," was opposed by two "hometown" candidates.[1] The Independent Labor Party, in making its first bid for election in the federal constituency of Brandon, nominated Beatrice Brigden, the only woman (to date) ever to stand as a federal candidate in this riding. Brigden, who had been educated in south-western Manitoba and at Brandon College, had travelled extensively in Canada as a Methodist lecturer from 1913 to 1919. However, she, like A.E. Smith, broke with the Methodist Church in 1919 as a result of the church's attitude towards the General Strike. During the 1920s, she had become a very active member of the Independent Labor Party in Brandon. Meanwhile, David W. Beaubier, the Conservative party's unsuccessful standard-bearer in 1925 and 1926, was nominated again, albeit after much deliberation. While Beaubier himself later explained that he did not wish to run "for I had taken a licking in the stock market and could not afford to run"[2] and that he had consented only as the local Conservatives "could find no one who would accept the nomination, and rather than let the seat go to Hon. T.A. Crerar by default...,"[3] the scenario may have been somewhat more complex than suggested. The sixty-six year old Beaubier was a two time loser and the Conservatives may have actively sought a stronger candidate--perhaps a "big name" import like those whom they had regularly nominated against Sifton.[4] There were rumours of other local candidates as well and two men, ex-Alderman George Dinsdale and R.L. McQuarrie, were actually nominated. These latter two quickly withdrew, however, and the local hotel keeper emerged again as the uncontested choice of the Tories.

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[1] While Crerar had doubted, in 1929, "if any outsider would carry it [the Brandon riding] in a general election..." (PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, November 23, 1929), the minister's non-resident status was not a public issue when the general election occurred, although it may well have been significant "behind the scenes."

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[2] PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306622, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934

[3] Ibid.

[4] Crerar believed that the Tories had tried to persuade ex-Prime Minister Meighen to run in Brandon. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, Crerar to A.B. Hudson, June 2, 1930. While one observer described Beaubier as a "dud" (PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 200, 171471, Wm. Iverach to N. Lambert, June 18, 1934), another warned that "Dave will make as formidable an opponent as any Conservative that might have been brought out...." QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, Roy McPhail to Crerar, June 2, 1930

In actuality, the personal appeal of the candidates may not have been as significant as usual in this Depression election in which "issues" seemed predominant. In Crerar's opinion, unemployment was important "in places like Brandon" while in the rural areas "it [unemployment] does not count but they are working New Zealand butter there for all they are worth."[5] Colonel Taylor, the provincial Conservative leader who addressed Beaubier's nomination meeting, strongly attacked the Minister of Labor, Heenan, and Mackenzie King himself for denying that there was any unemployment and for the notorious "not a five cent piece" speech.[6] Later, N. Whitby Kerr, a young Conservative lawyer, reminded local farmers that they had lost their best--i.e.,the "home"--market, since the Liberal government had permitted New Zealand dairy products to enter Canada free of duty.[7] Crerar, for his part, devoted much time to attacking Bennett's advocacy of higher protective tariffs, to which the West was traditionally opposed.

While the railway vote was always significant in Brandon, the attitude of that segment of the electorate was particularly interesting in 1930. Crerar would presumably enjoy some advantage as a result of his position as Minister of Railways and Canals. The Independent Labor Party traditionally did well in the city's east end. Nevertheless, "rumours" early in the campaign contended that both of the railway companies were supporting the Conservatives (perhaps in response to Bennett's tariff policies which would presumably benefit Canada's east-west transportation system).[8] Consequently, the campaign for the "railway vote" became particularly intense. For example, a rumour was again spread through the C.N.R. shops to the effect that Bennett, who reportedly was a large shareholder in the C.P.R., would amalgamate the two companies--and the C.N.R. employees "will be left without jobs."[9] Crerar, himself, appealed to one R.H. Cobb, the Assistant Grand Chief Engineer in the international Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, to "come up...sometime this month...and give me a lift with the boys in Brandon and Souris."[10] While the Cleveland-based union official was not able to join personally in Crerar's campaign, due to engagements elsewhere, he did write a "Dear Friend" letter, on Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers' stationery, that spoke highly of the Mackenzie King government, of "our friend and Brother, Peter Heenan, Minister of Labour,"[11] and of T.A. Crerar, "a personal friend" who would assuredly provide the Brotherhood with a "square deal" in the future.[12] Cobb, in addition, promised to do what he could about the disturbing rumours that "Labour" would field its own candidate: "I am writing to some of my friends trying to head that off as it will without doubt work against us."[13]

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[5] Ibid., box 87, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, July 5, 1930

[6] Brandon Daily Sun, May 20, 1930

[7] Ibid., July 19, 1930

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[8] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 174, 148246, J.G. Gardiner to King, May 19, 1930

[9] PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 38, 22376, H.C. Hodgson to Bennett, May 20, 1930

[10] QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, Crerar to R.H. Cobb, June 5, 1930

[11] Ibid., R.H. Cobb to "My Dear Friend", May 22, 1930

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., R.H. Cobb to Crerar, June 12, 1930

Actually, observers disagreed as to the significance of Beatrice Brigden's candidature. The I.L.P. nominee was, in Crerar's opinion, "of the extreme type of labour but quite a good talker."[14] While Crerar conceded that she would win some support, especially with "the railwaymen... who have been out of work owing to the short crop of last year,"[15] his advisors believed that Brigden would take more votes from Beaubier "than she will from me."[16] Local Conservatives feared that this was true: in fact, they suspected that the Liberals had engineered her candidature for that very reason.[17] As it was, her 1,331 votes (drawn primarily from Brandon, Souris and Rivers) did not prove to be a determining factor.

Crerar's enhanced stature as a cabinet minister should have been politically significant. However, it also meant that the Minister had extensive campaign responsibilities outside of his adopted constituency and one suspects that Crerar as "an outsider" could ill afford the time spent elsewhere--i.e.,ten days in Ontario, two days in Saskatchewan, and the week in the other Manitoba constituencies. Even Clifford Sifton's supporters used to become nervous when that well established Brandon politician was absent for any length of time: no wonder that one Crerar supporter apprehensively compared his candidate's absence with the reports that the resident Beaubier was canvassing door to door. Crerar's public meetings were no answer as the "voters who will vote right anyway are the only ones who attend...."[18] Admittedly, the big names helped draw crowds as R.B. Bennett did when he reportedly spoke to some 2,000 on Beaubier's behalf.[19] However, the adoption of door-to-door canvassing meant Crerar's forced absences may have been an important additional weakness in 1930.

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[14] Ibid., Crerar to R.H. Cobb, June 29, 1930

[15] Whereas the railways had hired 430 men locally by May, 1929, the companies had engaged only 18 men at a corresponding time in 1930. Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., Crerar to A.K. Cameron, June 23, 1930

[18] Ibid., box 87, M.H. Roy to Crerar Committee Rooms, July 14, 1930

A potentially important factor in the 1930 federal election was the result of provincial political considerations. Crerar, as a Liberal-Progressive, was anxious to secure the support of those provincial voters who had been returning the Progressives to office since 1922. Some Progressives, however, were former Conservatives who might be inclined to return to their old allegiance federally now that the federal Progressives were no longer a factor. Crerar, therefore, was delighted when Colonel Taylor, the provincial Conservative leader, intervened in the federal contest in Brandon.

> ...he [Taylor] made quite rosy predictions as to what the Conservatives were going to do in Manitoba and...when they were through with the Federal job, they were going to clean up on the Provincial Government. Now it happens that half of Bracken's supporters in the Legislature were former Conservatives...many of them will be working for the simple reason that the Federal fight is their next Provincial fight.[20]

While the significance of this possible inter-relationship between provincial and federal politics cannot be measured, it is interesting to note that Beaubier did much better in the rural polls against Crerar than he had ever done against Forke. Perhaps, therefore, Taylor's entry into the federal campaign had alienated fewer "Tory Progressives" than Crerar had assumed.

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[19] Brandon Daily Sun, June 23, 1930. The Conservatives certainly made a major effort in Brandon as H.H. Stevens, Dr. Manion and Premier Howard Ferguson of Ontario all campaigned in the constituency. In addition, ex-Alderman George Dinsdale also worked actively on Beaubier's behalf. The Conservatives obviously believed that Crerar could be defeated.

[20] QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, June 23, 1930

There was an additional potential factor in this 1930 contest that, unfortunately, again cannot be assessed to any degree. Crerar did have an extensive political record and that could, of course, be both an asset and a liability. While he was a prestigious national figure of political consequence, the name of this former president of the United Grain Growers was also associated with rather luke-warm support for the wheat pool and with the fifteen year old failure of the Home Bank in which Crerar, and other U.G.G. officials, had allegedly sold shares for compensation.[21] While the significance of these "associations" cannot be measured, one does suspect that some of the criticisms, like the following, were exaggerated:

> ...Crerar is very much more of a liability than an asset to the party, and it was the biggest political blunder that Mr. King ever made when he put him into Brandon and gave him the portfolio of railways...."[22]

However, the fact that Crerar had undoubtedly made some enemies might help explain his defeat in 1930 to a man of no particular political stature, by a vote of 8,512 to 6,452.

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[21] Ibid., ser. III, box 117, A.B. Hudson to Crerar, March 28, [?]

[22] PAC, M. King Papers, JI ser., v. 200, 171471-72, Wm. Iverach to Norman Lambert, June 18, 1934. Likewise the suggestion that Brandon Conservatives had purposely allowed Crerar to win the February by-election by acclamation as he "was open to attack from so many angles that it would be a shame to waste it in a by-election" (ibid.) is intriguing but contradictory to other evidence. According to newspaper reports, Brandon Conservatives had wished to oppose Crerar but the decision was left to the provincial executive. Brandon Daily Sun, January 7, 1930. General McRae, the Conservative's national organizer, provided a complainant with a similar explanation. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 32, E-18380, General A.D. McRae to Col. S.C. Robinson, M.P., February 11, 1930

Crerar, himself, attributed Liberal losses in 1930 to several factors: the stockmarket crash; the alienation of the Ukrainian vote which he believed to be vital in six or seven Manitoba constituencies; New Zealand butter; depressed grain prices; and unemployment.[23] Presumably all of these factors affected the results in the Brandon riding to some degree. The key factor, however, in 1930 was surely the fact that the Conservatives "swept" the nation and Brandon was a part of that sweep.[24] Beaubier himself later contended that Bennett's leadership had been the vital factor in his Brandon victory.[25] However, one still suspects that local factors were of real consequence.[26] Certainly Beaubier's home-town status must have contributed to his continuing success in Brandon itself, where he won 27 of 28 polls with a total of 3,953 votes to Crerar's 1869. While the contrast between local boy and "outsider" was presumably greatest in the City of Brandon, Beaubier did split the rural vote with the Minister (winning 36 polls to Crerar's 31 although losing in total votes by the small margin of 4,473 to 4,584) whereas he had lost the rural vote in both 1925 and 1926 to Robert Forke, a long-time local (i.e., rural) resident and farm leader. Beaubier won, in 1930, against T.A. Crerar, who did not have those same local ties. The temptation to conclude that Crerar's "outsider" status was an important factor, therefore, is hard to resist.

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[23] PAC, M. King Papers, JI ser., vol. 172, 147150, Crerar to A. Haydon, September 6, 1930

[24] The Conservatives in 1926 had not won a single seat in Manitoba: they were successful in eleven of the province's seventeen constituencies in 1930. While they had won 91 seats in 1926, they were triumphant in 137 ridings in 1930. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 188, 202

[25] "...you won the election, not me. You had campaigned the country from coast to coast for three years and let the people know where the country was drifting without intelligent guidance: showed up the Liberal leader's weakness, instability and, thanks to you, the Conservative Party carried the country." PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306623, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, November 24, 1934

[26] The suggestion was made to Crerar during the campaign that the Ku Klux Klan, who had played a major role in the defeat of the Liberals in Saskatchewan in 1929, "were out to defeat you." QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. II, box 86, A.B. Copp to Crerar, June 3, 1930. Crerar, however, discounted this rumour and he noted in reply: "So far as I know, there is not a single KKK organization in my Constituency." Ibid., Crerar to A.B. Copp, June 5, 1930

One might well expect that the Depression, which had obviously contributed to Crerar's defeat in 1930 would be politically significant at the municipal level as that political sector, during the course of this study, has proven to be quite responsive to changing economic conditions. However, the stockmarket crash of October 1929 had not prevented the re-election by acclamation of Mayor Cater, nor had it aided the municipal political fortunes of the Independent Labor Party, whose numbers on council actually declined in that year. The growing unemployment problem--the landmark of the Depression--did become more evident in 1930 as the Brandon Unemployed Association, a creation of the local Communist Party (and in which local Communists continued to play a leading role),[27] "forced" the local government to deal with their concerns.[28] Furthermore, the city's financial position—which was obviously affected by soaring relief costs[29]—had become, in the opinion of Mayor Cater's latest challenger, F.R. Longworth, the most vital issue. Longworth (who was an insurance broker, a prominent Young Conservative and one of the "new wave" of aldermen who had entered civic politics in the late 1920s) decried the city's history of "over-drafts" which, he contended, began with Cater's election in December 1921 and had continued unchecked—except for the efforts of the now departed city manager.[30] Cater, for his part, insisted that "Brandon is financially strong and is considered one of the best governed cities in the Dominion."[31] The combined results of this municipal election (i.e., Cater's easy re-election by a vote of 2,490 to 1,592; the rejection of the city manager system of administration by a vote of 1,341 to 799; and the decision by a vote of 1,319 to 794 to continue operating the costly municipally owned street railway system)[32] suggests that the full impact of the Depression was not yet registered at the municipal level in 1930. That would occur during the following year.

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[27] Percy Worthington, the chairman of the Brandon Unemployed Association, contended, however, that the group was now acting independently of the Communist Party. Brandon Daily Sun, March 12, 1930. Martin J. Forkin, the secretary of the Association, did stand unsuccessfully in the 1930 federal election for the Communist Party in Winnipeg North Centre. Forkin, who had moved to Brandon from Winnipeg in 1912 to become a newsboy and then a railway employee, had served in the Great War. He had also been a member of the local Communist party since its inception. PAC, J.S. Woodsworth Papers, vol. 10, file 35, The Workers' Vanguard, July, 1930

[28] Delegations of some 150 men attended each council meeting until that body rescinded an earlier decision not to grant relief to single persons (Brandon Daily Sun, May 31, 1930), although their demands "for work or full maintenance at trade union rates of pay..." (ibid., July 15, 1930) were repeatedly rejected.

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29. Relief costs in Brandon in early 1930 were already 90% greater than comparative costs in October 1929.

30. The resignation of Fawkes, the city manager, had left Mayor Cater in an unchallenged position and the result, Longworth contended, was a deficit in 1929 and, again, in 1930. Brandon Daily Sun, September 17, 1930. Longworth was, unlike Cater, a strong advocate of the city manager system of administration, a concept on which the ratepayers were to pass judgement (again) in 1930.

31. *Ibid.*, October 27, 1930

32. This system would cost the city of Brandon some $47,000 in 1930. *Ibid.*, May 6, 1931. Admittedly, a major portion of that sum ($26,968.08) was a fixed cost, an obligation which would exist for the next twenty-three years irrespective of whether the system was in operation. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1930. The voters would reverse this decision a few months later.

Certainly local economic conditions were more depressed in 1931. 272 families were on relief in August 1931 as contrasted with 28 the year before;[33] local relief costs "soared" in 1931 to approximately $66,000 ;[34] the city's "over-draft" at the local Imperial Bank of Commerce totalled an alarming $426,884 by year end;[35] while Brandon was forced to seek permission to refund that portion of the city's long-term debt which began to mature in that year. When, as a result, provincial authorities seriously questioned the city's earlier decision to continue the operation of the local street car system, Brandon ratepayers, with the encouragement of Mayor Cater, decided by a vote of 1,421 to 794 to put the cars "in the barns." Brandon ratepayers apparently were more aware of the Depression and its likely impact on the community in 1931 than they had been one year before.

The fact that the veteran Mayor Cater was defeated in 1931, after having served for ten continuous years, suggests that he, too, was a victim of the Depression. Cater had, since 1929, fought a strenuous campaign against the Municipal Commissioner Levy, a special tax established by the Bracken government. Cater's critics had argued that Brandon was suffering economically as a result of Cater's conflict with the province and, admittedly, the flow of provincial relief assistance to the city was affected somewhat.[36] As the Manitoba Court of Appeal, in September 1931, declared the tax to be legal and the City of Brandon was charged with court costs, in addition to its own legal expenses and the previously unpaid "levy," Cater's campaign proved to be a failure. That decision may well have been politically, as well as economically, significant!

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[33] Ibid., September 5, 1931

[34] The reported figures varied somewhat from $65,885.19 (ibid., February 6, 1932) to $67.637.14.

[35] Ibid., January 5, 1932. The "overdraft" was increased by $42,114 in 1931.

[36] For example, the flow of provincial monies allocated for jointly financed winter relief projects and ear-marked for Brandon was curtailed during the height of the dispute. Ibid., November 15, 1933

The key to defeating Cater, as it had been to conquering A.E. Smith in 1922, was to organize effectively all those who were his opponents. While there had been several "citizen groups" organized in the past, the Brandon Progress Association was unique in that approximately 600 people reportedly attended its September 1931 inaugural meeting and concurred in the decision to endorse qualified municipal candidates who shared their concerns for the city's financial plight and who were committed to the creation of harmony--within council itself and with the Manitoba government. This citizens group was also unique in that it was able "to poll" the entire "anti-Cater" vote more successfully than ever before. Cater, in 1930, had won what proved to be an easy victory by a vote of 2,490 to 1,592. However, in 1931, Cater (whose support had remained constant) suffered an overwhelming defeat when Ed Fotheringham polled 4,033 votes to the incumbent's 2,358.[37] Presumably, the organizational efforts of Fotheringham's supporters and the growing concern with the city's financial plight[38] contributed to that result. In addition, one suspects that Cater's "unbeatable" political image--which had been reinforced by eleven successive mayoralty victories (including the 1927 by-election)--had been badly shattered by his defeat on the issue of the Municipal Commissioner Levy. His opponents, buoyed by the realization that Canada's most successful municipal politican could, in fact, be conquered, had gone to the polls in unprecedented numbers. Success breeds success: failure breeds failure.

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[37] Fotheringham, the manager of the Brandon Creamery and Supply Company, had been a very popular alderman for a brief period of time in the late 1920s before his departure for Winnipeg.

[38] The 1931 deficit, in the estimation of the city treasurer, would be $92,000 and as the city had "caved in" to public pressure by restoring partial street car service--after only one month's discontinuation--there would be no saving there. Brandon Daily Sun, September 22, 1931

Although the city's financial plight and the unsuccessful confrontation with the provincial government may have cost Brandon's most successful mayor his office in 1931, the Depression had no obvious impact on the aldermanic races, unless a sense of pending crisis explains why the unusually large number of fourteen candidates filed for election in that year. Neither the Brandon Progress Association nor the Independent Labor Party candidates did exceptionally well, although candidates identified with the former civic body did lead in the polling. However, as some Brandon Progress Association candidates, such as north end resident John Kasuirak of 1917 MacDonald Avenue, trailed badly while Alderman Harry Spafford, an I.L.P. nominee, placed fourth--well in advance of his fellow party nominees,[39] one must conclude that the candidates' individual qualifications were still more important to the electors than party labels in 1931. The Depression had not significantly advanced the cause of party or group politics at the municipal level.[40]

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39. Spafford placed fourth with 2,616 votes while Alderman Davis, who failed to secure re-election, placed sixth with 2,380 votes. I.L.P. nominee H.G. Spratt was well back with only 1,632 votes. Ibid., October 28, 1931

40. However, the number of I.L.P. aldermanic candidates, at least, increased from one in 1930 to three in 1931. Even so, this could not be considered to be a major bid for local power. Perhaps the defeats of the later 1920s had ended such I.L.P. hopes.

Whether that Depression--which, in Brandon, meant that 459 families, an estimated 10% of city's population, were on relief in February of 1932 and that local projected relief costs for the year totalled $79,795[41] --would have a greater impact on provincial politics was an interesting question which the June 1932 Manitoba election would hopefully answer. Also, the 1932 provincial election in the Brandon constituency would be an interesting test of whether municipal support was transferable to the provincial political level as all four local candidates for election to the Manitoba legislature were successful municipal politicians. Two of the candidates, Harry Spafford of the Independent Labor Party and D.E. Clement, the Liberal Progressive nominee, were Brandon aldermen while both George Dinsdale, the Conservative party's standard-bearer, and Harry Cater, who was seeking election for the second time as an Independent Liberal, had very extensive municipal careers, both at the aldermanic and mayoralty level.

The 1932 provincial election in Brandon was also of particular interest as Dr. Edmison, Brandon's "fusionist" or Independent M.L.A. since 1922, had decided to retire from politics and, as a result, this election marked the return to party politics at the provincial level in this city. Nevertheless, the provincial political scene was still somewhat confused by the fact that the Manitoba Liberals, in 1931, had officially joined forces with the Bracken government after months of negotiation.[42] Meanwhile, the party split between "coalitionist" and "straight" Liberals that had originated in 1917 remained unresolved and

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[41] Brandon Daily Sun, February 12, 1932

[42] PAC, M. King Papers, JI ser., vol. 190, 161951, King to Crerar, January 16, 1932. However, T.A. Crerar, Brandon's ex-M.P., did not join that government as King had urged.

Brandon was one of the constituencies in which the "straight" faction, headed by J.E. McMurray and Fred Hamilton--both of Winnipeg, hoped to field its own candidate.[43] As a result, a meeting of some 150 people was held in Brandon: however, no "straight" Liberal candidate emerged.[44] Nevertheless, one of the principal supporters of Harry Cater, who was nominated as an Independent Liberal at a meeting attended by some fifty people,[45] was one George Harris who had chaired the earlier unproductive "straight" Liberal nominating meeting. As the results of the preferential balloting would later indicate, Cater and D.E. Clement, the Liberal-Progressive nominee, clearly represented two separate political forces in that most of Cater's second votes were allocated to Spafford, the I.L.P. candidate--rather than to Clement.[46] The Liberal party in Brandon in 1932 remained as a divided political force.

Meanwhile, the real fight in Brandon in 1932 was between the Conservatives and the Independent Labor Party.[47] Manitoba Conservatives, despite the wishes of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett,[48] had refused Bracken's invitation in 1931 to join the coalition, a decision which, in itself, became, in the opinion of some observers, the key issue in the 1932 campaign.[49] They had, instead, begun organizing for this provincial election immediately upon the completion of their very successful 1930 federal election,[50] and their subsequent excellent organization proved to be a notable feature of the 1932 campaign.[51] Certainly, the Conservatives appeared to be unusually well prepared in Brandon where poll meetings were called to select ten delegates each to attend the local nominating convention.[52] The fact that four men stood for the nomination was also indicative of considerable local interest and, probably, of a prevailing belief that the Brandon seat could be won. While George Dinsdale, the prominent businessman-community worker, had the most extensive experience in that he had served six years as alderman and two years as mayor,[53] Brandon's leading Salvation Armyist won the nomination only on the second ballot. Surely, this was a good omen for the local Tories.

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[43] Ibid., 161954, Crerar to King, March 8, 1932

[44] Brandon Daily Sun, May 26, 1932

[45] Ibid., June 4, 1932

[46] Ibid., June 17, 1932

[47] Certainly Dinsdale, the Conservative candidate, made a determined bid for labour support in this election, just as he had always done as a municipal candidate. For example, E.H. Cook, a "Canadian labor representative at the Geneva convention," spoke on Dinsdale's behalf at one of several meetings obviously designed to appeal to the labour and ethnic vote. Ibid., June 3, 1932. One Fred Cross, a local labour man, also spoke for Dinsdale at several meetings while the president of the Ukrainian Reading Society, Fred Slusar, campaigned in his native language on behalf of the Conservative nominee. However, according to the voting patterns, Dinsdale had only limited success in winning this segment of the vote--a segment which he had seemingly lost during that turbulent summer of 1919.

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[48] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 34, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, January 18, 1932

[49] Winnipeg Evening Tribune, June 17, 1932

[50] The Conservatives won eleven of Manitoba's seventeen seats in 1930 including Brandon where David Beaubier won all of the city polls.

[51] Winnipeg lawyer H.R. Drummond-Hay stressed the organizational "genius" of the provincial organizer, Dr. Hodgson, who had commenced organizing provincially in 1930. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 306541, H.R. Drummond-Hay to Bennett, June 10, 1932. As a result, they had "got out a record vote...." Ibid., vol. 565, 350237, H.R. Drummond-Hay to Bennett, June 18, 1932. However, it must be noted that Drummond-Hay was attempting to persuade Bennett to find employment for Hodgson as a federal organizer in Manitoba. Finally, the Tribune, a critic of the Conservative party, complained that the Conservatives had stressed organization to too large an extent and "it is not thinking enough about the shaping of public sentiment which is the basis of a party's appeal to the electorate...." Winnipeg Evening Tribune, June 18, 1932

[52] Brandon Daily Sun, April 8, 1932

However, the Independent Labor Party nomination was also a much sought prize in 1932 as three "municipal" politicians stepped forth. Alderman Harry Spafford, reputed to be one of the less radical members of the I.L.P.,[54] had placed fourth in the previous aldermanic elections with 2,616 votes and his nomination victory (over ex-Alderman Roy Davis and ex-Alderman William Hill) provided an ideal opportunity to test the transferability of Spafford's municipal support. Spafford's candidature might also serve as a test of the political significance of the Depression as the I.L.P. was the only party that could not be held accountable for prevailing economic conditions. Presumably, they stood to gain as a result. At least, the usually perceptive T.A. Crerar believed "that the Labor people where they run candidates will very considerably increase their vote...and I should not be surprised if they had six or seven [as contrasted to three] when the election is over...."[55]

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53. Two of the four nominees, C.C. Mitchell and Fred Young, were currently members of city council. W.E.E. Taylor, who was eliminated after the first ballot, had no experience in municipal politics. Ibid., May 6, 1932. However, Dinsdale had been badly defeated as an aldermanic candidate when he, the incumbent, had placed last in a field of seven in 1927. His municipal record, therefore, was somewhat tarnished.

54. Spafford, who was only forty-two years old, was an active sportsman and he was reported to have "a wide following, not only in Labour circles, but among the voting youths of the constituency." Winnipeg Evening Tribune, June 15, 1932. Local businessman and ex-Alderman Jack Donnelly, who had a distinct distaste for "Reds," found Spafford to be less objectionable than other I.L.P. members. Interview with J.H. Donnelly, September 24, 1973

55. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 121, Crerar to King, June 6, 1932

Although the Conservatives, whose numbers declined from fifteen to ten, did suffer a significant setback in this Depression election, George Dinsdale's "third ballot" victory over Spafford[56] meant that the party was "gaining" Brandon[57] in spite of the opposite trend elsewhere in the province. While most observers were most interested in analyzing the failure of the Conservative party as a whole--which they did in terms of the party's inadequate leadership[58] and their excessive partisanship,[59] the decision of Brandon electors to abandon their traditional pattern of "ministerialist" voting requires some explanation. First of all, voter disenchantment with the Bennett government's record may not have been as severe as elsewhere in that local economic conditions seemed to be slightly improved in the spring of 1932.[60] The crops looked good;[61] there were a slightly fewer number of families on relief than one year before; and Imperial Oil gasoline sales had increased in Brandon over the same month in 1931.[62] Secondly, Dave Beaubier, the popular hotel keeper-politician who undoubtedly had won a large personal following during his three successful (i.e., in the city) federal election campaigns, was one of the few M.P.'s who did campaign extensively on behalf of the provincial Conservative candidate and R.B. Bennett, for one, believed that Beaubier's

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[56] Dinsdale, with 2,647, had a commanding lead on the "first ballot"; Spafford, with 1,574, was second; Clement, with 1,423, was third; Cater, with 893 votes, was last and, thus, eliminated. Brandon Daily Sun, June 18, 1932. Cater's "second choices" were then divided--i.e., Spafford-250; Clement-132; and Dinsdale-111. On the third "ballot," Spafford received 319 of Clement's "second choices" and 49 of Cater's "third choices." However, Dinsdale--who polled only 223 "second choice Clement votes" and 40 "third choice Cater votes"--still won by a total of 3,021 to 2,192. Ibid.

[57] Dinsdale's victory constituted a "gain" as the seat had been held by Edmison, an Independent.

[58] PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 565, 350236-37, H.R. Drummond-Hay to Bennett, June 18, 1932. The widow of one of Roblin's most able cabinet ministers also shared this view: "In the first place, we have no leader. There is little in Colonel Taylor to inspire--there is no vision." Ibid., 350240-42, Mrs. Colin H. Campbell to Bennett, June 24, 1932. T.A. Crerar concurred:

> "If the Conservatives were well lead and had some good men in their front rank that inspired confidence they would win the election easily, for the government, while the people believe it is honest, has not inspired confidence in its ability to handle the problems of the time effectively."

QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 121, Crerar to King, June 6, 1932

[59] W.L. Morton contends that the Conservatives' decision to reject Bracken's coalition offer hurt them in the non-partisan rural areas as did the entry of R.P. Roblin into the campaign. Morton, Manitoba A History, 425

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60. Manitoba Conservatives obviously feared that the Depression--more specifically Bennett's failure to cope with the Depression--was a key issue in this provincial election as Conservative M.P.'s were asked "to keep out of the fight." PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 565, 350256, Bennett to B.M. Stitt, M.P., July 2, 1932. This decision, the Conservative Prime Minister believed, was a political mistake.

> "They permitted the Federal Government to be attacked and they would not permit the federal members to meet such attacks. My view is that, had they courageously met the situation with counter attacks and proper explanations of the situation, they would have had a much different result."

Ibid., 350249, Bennett to W.S. Evans, June 28, 1932

61. Brandon, as an agricultural market centre, would be directly affected by changes in local farm conditions and Beaubier's comments on this matter are most interesting:

> "In the Brandon Federal Constituency, where on the whole the farmers are fairly prosperous, the question of farm products did not enter into the question, because the district is well settled and many have been through worse and much harder times during the past fifty years than they are encountering at the present moment."

Ibid., vol. 491, 307023, D.W. Beaubier to A.W. Merriam, June 20, 1932

62. Ibid., 307022, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, June 6, 1932

assistance was vital.[63] The fact that Beaubier was not a cabinet minister may also have been advantageous as the public reportedly held "ordinary" M.P.'s less accountable than cabinet ministers for prevailing enonomic conditions.[64] Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, there was the subsequent suggestion of the local constituency organizer:

> As organizer in Brandon in 1932 I realized that our victory was not so much the result of organization but due to the fact that with the invaluable assistance of the local paper we convinced the electors that their interests would be taken care of better by a Conservative government.[65]

Did the enthusiasm of the Sun, the personal support of David Beaubier M.P., the division among Brandon Liberals and a glimmer of hope for an improved economic future combine to delude Brandon voters into believing that George Dinsdale and his fellow Conservatives could, in fact, form a government? Did some (albeit in error) Brandon electors vote "ministerialist" in 1932 as they had done on so many other occasions?[66] It is an intriguing possibility.

That Brandon's mayor and council should all have been elected by acclamation in the 1932 municipal elections seems, at first glance, to

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63. "...where you and Beaubier and others took hold the result was amazingly satisfactory." Ibid., vol. 565, 350256, Bennett to B.M. Stitt, M.P., July 2, 1932

64. This, at least, was the opinion of the Conservative's provincial organizer. Ibid., 350251, H.C. Hodgson to H.H. Stevens, June 25, 1932

65. Ibid., vol. 491, 306853-54, Roy Watson to R.K. Finlayson, February 15, 1933

66. Dinsdale also benefitted from the fact that his opposition was quite divided. For example, both Alderman Harry Spafford, the I.L.P. nominee, and Harry Cater appealed particularly to the city's north and east ends for support.

be rather surprising as the Depression was presumably a time of much dissatisfaction. Certainly, there had been many problems in 1932. As the relief budget climbed steadily, aldermen attempted to reduce costs wherever possible,[67] although the persistent opposition of the Brandon Unemployed Association led to many confrontations. In addition, the decision to grant MacArthur and Sons, a local transportation firm, the exclusive right to operate a city bus system as a substitute for the municipally owned street railway system had generated much criticism from the Independent Labor Party, both in Brandon and in the provincial legislature.[68] However, elections--even civic elections--cost money and the Sun, late in 1932, launched an intensive (and successful) campaign for the re-election of mayor and council by acclamation so that several hundred dollars could be saved.[69] That this Sun campaign had considerable public support is suggested by the fact that several candidates, including mayoralty candidate Harry Cater,[70] withdrew at the last moment. The Depression was, thus, politically significant in this municipal election, albeit in an unexpected manner.

Civic politics in Brandon during the following year was marked by the unprecedented predominance of several citizen organizations.

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[67] For example, council reduced the amount of relief assistance paid to each family in early 1932 on the grounds that the cost of living had been falling somewhat. Ibid., January 29, 1932

[68] Ibid., April 6, 1932

[69] The Sun believed that the re-election of this "sane, stable, careful administration" would also be beneficial to the community. Ibid., October 19, 1932

[70] Cater, in the following year's mayoralty campaign, claimed that he had stepped aside in 1932 at the urging of the Brandon Progress Association who had, in turn, promised that they would not oppose Cater in 1933. Ibid., November 14, 1933. The Brandon Progress Association subsequently denied that there had been any such "deal." Ibid., November 15, 1933

Admittedly, the Brandon Progress Association, after its 1931 victory over Harry Cater, had become rather non-political as it tended to occupy itself with proposals for thrift gardens and in promoting the sale of sewer debentures. However, this Association did renew its political interest at municipal election time that year when it declared its support for mayoralty candidate Fred Young and all the incumbent aldermanic candidates, including the I.L.P. alderman, Harry Spafford -- "on account of his splendid record in the City Council, and his proven ability...."[71] The Brandon Unemployed Association, which had been organized in 1930, continued to be active in pressuring council for more dental and medical assistance; in opposing the planned deportation of two immigrant families who were on relief;[72] and in organizing a successful relief workers strike in September 1933.[73] The Brandon Workers Association, a new citizen organization, also appeared before the rather beleaguered council in 1933 on behalf of those on relief. This body argued that relief assistance should be paid in full[74] until all available money had been expended at which time the Bennett government should be confronted with a demand for federal assistance.[75] The Brandon Taxpayers

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[71] Ibid., November 22, 1933

[72] Ibid., February 21, 1933

[73] Ibid., September 9, 1933. The 100 strikers scored considerable gains in that food allowances were raised to the Winnipeg standard, 15% of which was to be paid in cash; and a "salary" of 40¢ per day could be paid--for work relief.

[74] Certain "cuts" had been made early in 1933.

[75] Brandon Daily Sun, May 9, 1933. Whether this body was a "front" for local Liberals is not known. However, the federal government did assume responsibility in mid 1933 for supporting the single unemployed. Sleeping and eating facilities were provided in the old immigration shed at 5th and Pacific. Ibid., August 12, 1933

Association,[76] a group which apparently included several of the city's "largest" taxpayers, assumed for itself the responsibility of advising council in 1933 on all civic expenditures and on taxation policy. While many of their recommendations went unheeded,[77] this pressure group did persuade council to reduce the established local tax rate by one-half mill. As Alderman Oglesby explained, "if they [the members of the Taxpayers Association] went on strike for a year it would cause an embarassing situation."[78]

The Independent Labor Party continued, in 1933, to be the only partisan body that displayed an open interest in municipal affairs, although prominent Conservatives were to be found within the ranks of the Brandon Progress Association.[79] While many I.L.P. proposals, such as their opposition to Dinsdale's private member's bill which would have abolished "plumping,"[80] were motivated by their own political self interest, I.L.P. Alderman Roy Davis's horizons, for one, were extended to include a proposal for a single prairie province (so that administrative costs would be reduced) and an expression of opposition to the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany. However, the I.L.P. still did not make further progress municipally in Brandon, even as late as 1933.[81] While Alderman Harry Spafford scored a tremendous victory as he led the polls in 1933 with 3,984 votes, this I.L.P. nominee, as noted previously, had received the additional endorsement of the Brandon Progress Association and his personal triumph was not equalled by other I.L.P. nominees, including Helen Daisy McDuffe, Brandon's first female aldermanic candidate.[82] Thus contrary perhaps to expectations, the Depression was not proving to be "good years" for the Independent Labor Party.[83]

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[76] W.C. Hughes was president; C.S. Unicume was vice-president; A.E. White was secretary-treasurer; while O.L. Harwood, J.B. Curran, A.R. McDiarmid and the omnipresent Harry Cater were directors. Ibid., February 21, 1933

[77] For example, the Taxpayers Association wanted the school board to collect its own tax-levy; that statutory limits should be established for both municipal and school taxes; and that municipal services, such as waterworks and the cemetery, should be required to pay their own way. Ibid., February 21, 1933

[78] Ibid., April 7, 1933

[79] Fred Young, who was endorsed by the Brandon Progress Association in 1933, had sought the Conservative nomination for Brandon in the 1932 provincial election.

[80] Brandon Daily Sun, March 15, 1933. "Plumping" for one or more candidates enabled the I.L.P. to concentrate its strength on a few able candidates. For example, "plumping" for Webb and Morris was reported to be particularly evident at David Livingstone School and the Polish Hall, the two north end polls, in 1934. Ibid., November 28, 1934

Why Harry Cater should have won re-election in 1933 for the first ever two year mayoralty term over the Brandon Progress Association backed Fred Young, by a vote of 3,124 to 2,491, is not evident. Mayor Cater had been defeated by this same organization in 1931 and his last place finish in the 1932 provincial election could hardly have enhanced his political image! Did Young, who was supported by the same organization that had elected Mayor Fotheringham, suffer politically in 1933 due to the previous incumbent's failure to resolve the Depression? While that is a possibility, there is no evidence of such widespread dissatisfaction in the campaign itself or in the aldermanic results.

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[81] Although provision had been made in the summer of 1933 for taxpayers with arrears to "work off" those debts on civic projects, at the standard wage rate of 35¢ per hour for labourers and 65¢ per hour for a man and a four horse team, many residential taxpayers were still in arrears. Ibid., July 22, 1933. While it was suggested that several "good" candidates had been prevented from standing due to the fact that their taxes were in arrears, this handicap reportedly affected several would-be candidates and not solely the I.L.P. Ibid., November 16, 1933

[82] Helen McDuffe received 1,696 votes while George Morris, who had stood for election as early as 1913, lost again with 1,840 votes. Ibid.

[83] An unusual feature of the 1933 municipal election was the prominent role played by George Dinsdale, Brandon's Conservative M.L.A. He actively supported fellow Conservative Fred Young and he nominated north end resident John Kasuirak, another Brandon Progress Association endorsee. However, both men lost which may or may not say something about Dinsdale's influence in municipal politics.

In any event, the always controversial Cater had been restored to power for a two year term and that return was marked almost immediately by the renewal of the rather characteristic mayor-council conflict.[84] While this "war" continued seemingly unabated, the impact locally of the Depression became more severe. In March 1934, 2,834 Brandonites were on relief, the largest number to that date;[85] the costs for relief assistance were rising rapidly; and tax revenues were declining.[86] In addition, a series of relief workers strikes forced council to reverse its earlier decision to reduce relief allowances during the summer months. While the Forkin brothers could not get elected to office, they continued to exercise real political power in 1934.[87] This worsening

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[84] For example, when Alderman Giddings, the man responsible for the administration of the city's relief funds, charged the mayor with undue interference in relief problems, the mayor attempted to prevent the formation of an investigative committee by simply refusing to put that particular motion to a vote! Ibid., February 17, 1934. Although this committee was eventually struck and although its report proved to be critical of Cater, there was no effective way to control the obstructive tactics of the mayor. The conflict continued unabated.

[85] Ibid., May 3, 1934

[86] The relief costs for the January-July period in 1934 were $126,500 as contrasted with $91,000 for the same period the previous year. Tax revenues, for the same time period, declined from $357,093 to $326,361. Ibid., August 3, 1934

[87] Martin Forkin had run unsuccessfully as a Communist in North Winnipeg in 1930 while S. Forkin trailed the field in the Brandon school board elections in 1934. He did, however, receive 1027 votes. Ibid., November 28, 1934

Depression obviously was politically significant for at least one municipal politician in 1934. Alderman James Gidding, who had the very unenviable task of administering relief funds--a near fatal political responsibility, was soundly defeated in that autumn's municipal elections, despite his eight years of service as an alderman. The Depression era could mean "hard times" in a political sense as well as in economic terms.[88]

1935 proved to be one of those significant years in Canadian politics when a federal government was defeated. While the Depression presumably played the predominant role in the annihilation of the R.B. Bennett administration, the signs of Conservative weakness had been evident within Manitoba for many months before that election. The Conservatives were desperately short of funds at that point; and only those constituencies with Conservative M.P.'s, such as Brandon, were receiving any party information.[89] Who was primarily responsible for the lack of organization was not evident but the problem, as Prime Minister Bennett lamented, remained.

> I need hardly say to you that I am frequently greatly depressed with the political situation for, instead of our Party organizing as it should, our friends merely write to me asking what I am going to do about it.... I realize that there will be no organization in Manitoba unless someone heads the effort.[90]

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[88] The Depression could "destroy" political careers, as in the case of Giddings in 1934. On the other hand, the depressed economic conditions did not benefit any particular political group. The Independent Labor Party, for instance, was less significant now than before, although its single candidate, William Webb, did place third in 1934. Meanwhile, George Morris, the local perennial Socialist candidate, was again an unsuccessful sixth. Ibid.

[89] PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 565, 350437, T. George Kidd to Rod Finlayson, November 7, 1933. Bennett presumably was no longer supporting the party financially as he had done before 1930.

[90] Ibid., vol. 491, 306553, Bennett to W.B.K. McRury, January 31, 1934

The Manitoba Conservative party was apparently in need of a massive rebuilding effort: however, provincial Conservatives were divided internally over charges of unconstitutional procedures, misuse of party funds and a bitter fight for the presidency.[91] Consequently, Manitoba Conservatives--it would appear--were ill-prepared for the task that lay ahead in 1935.

Brandon Conservatives, on the other hand, were undoubtedly in a better "political state" than was the Manitoba party in general. First of all, both of the sitting members--provincial and federal--were Conservatives and that automatically would strengthen the party locally.[92] Also, the Brandon Conservative Association, in a resolution to the Prime Minister was strongly critical of "the inactivity of Conservative organizations throughout Canada at this time..."[93]--which, in itself, suggests a significant political awareness in early 1934. Finally, but unfortunately of indeterminable significance, Brandon Conservatives still

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91. H.A. McNeill, the party's provincial vice-president and a Brandonite--one of those Young Conservatives who had become active in the mid 1920s, had become acting president in early 1933 when Dr. H.C. Hodgson, the president and the party's most noted organizer, had resigned. Ibid., 306859, H.C. Hodgson to H.A. McNeill, March 23, 1933. However, McNeill was bitterly opposed in his successful bid for the presidency for several interesting reasons: he lived in Brandon at a time when many Conservatives believed that the president should reside in Winnipeg; he was believed to be too close to Drummond-Hay and, hence, to R.B. Bennett (ibid., 306683-84, R.R. Pattinson to Rod Finlayson, October 11, 1934); and he was a Roman Catholic, a fact which reportedly disturbed many Orange Lodge members. Ibid., 306700, John T. Haig to Rod Finlayson, October 23, 1934

92. Admittedly, there may have been some internal conflict among Conservatives within the Brandon federal organization as Beaubier, the M.P., was not invited to a Conservative meeting held in Virden in 1934 which suggested to Prime Minister Bennett some evidence of local disloyalty. Ibid., 306625, Bennett to D.W. Beaubier, November 29, 1934

93. Ibid., 306878, E.E. Logan to Bennett, May 8, 1934

enjoyed the support of the local newspaper, or as one Tory wrote in assessing the party's chances in rural Manitoba: "We then need no new paper because we have the Brandon Sun, located in the hub of rural Manitoba."[94]

Much of the Conservative strength in Brandon in 1935 was obviously due to the fact that Beaubier, the sitting member, had had longtime political connections with the city and the constituency. However, there were persistent rumours in 1935 that Colonel Beaubier was to be appointed to fill a "Manitoba" vacancy in the Senate. As H.A. McNeill--another Brandonite and now the president of the Manitoba Conservative Association--noted, both Beaubier and M.L.A. Alex Welsh of Boissevain were seemingly well qualified to follow in the footsteps of the late Senator (and Brandon's ex-M.P.) Robert Forke.

> Colonel Beaubier is very much of the same stamp of man as Mr. Alex Welsh. Both have been in the province for many years, both are definitely interested in farming and other business organizations in the Province, and Colonel Beaubier has given many years of excellent service to his fellow citizens in the western part of the Province of Manitoba.[95]

However, as Beaubier was not so rewarded,[96] Brandon Conservatives entered in the 1935 contest enjoying the advantage of an incumbent candidate.

Economic conditions would obviously be a major determinant in that 1935 federal election and local conditions were "mixed"--at least in the rural areas. While 60% of the bread wheats, as Beaubier reported, had been lost due to rust, the hay crop was excellent "and oats and barley fair. At any rate we are better off than a year ago for in this district we are fairly strong on diversified farming and feed has equal importance with wheat."[97] Consequently, Beaubier was cautiously optimistic:

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[94] Ibid., 306557, J. Campbell Kyle to Bennett, March 21, 1934

[95] Ibid., vol. 697, 427801-2, H.A. McNeill to Bennett, June 29, 1935

[96] Bennett reportedly was seeking "younger blood" and McNeill, who later modestly offered himself as a "candidate" for the Senate, noted that he was the youngest provincial Conservative president ever to be elected. Ibid., 427805, H.A. McNeill to Bennett, July 7, 1935

> ...I must say that there is very friendly feeling toward you and your government.
>
> The rural parts of the constituency has been and is favourable towards the wheat Pool [sic] and Mr. Paul Bredt has held two excellent meetings, one at Brandon and one at Virden...explaining the Wheat Board Bill. I feel sure this will help to swell our rural vote. The Farm Creditors Arrangement Act will also be of assistance in this respect....
>
> As far as I can learn Mr. King's radio addresses have met with no particular enthusiasm, Mr. Stevens is not mentioned as a serious contender in this constituency. The CCF is working very hard here but without, I believe, making serious headway.[98]

The Liberals' main concern earlier in the Depression had been to secure the same union with the Progressives federally that had been achieved provincially. T.A. Crerar reported considerable progress had occurred as a result of the provincial convention which was held in June 1933 in Brandon: "The feeling in the meeting could not have been better and was practically unanimous that a Liberal-Progressive organization for the whole province should be created to prepare for, and fight, the next federal election when it comes."[99] The "die-hards" (i.e., those who were opposed to fusion with the Progressives) still fought a rearguard action but the split seems to have been confined to

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97. Ibid., 491, 307055, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, August 7, 1935

98. Ibid.

99. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 915, 165687-90, Crerar to King, June 30, 1933

Winnipeg political circles.[100] According to the report of J.E. Matthews (a Brandon insurance salesman, president of the Brandon Liberal Association--and future candidate), several people were working actively throughout the riding in mid 1934 to unite Liberals and Progressives federally "with good success."[101] While it was rumoured, in mid 1934, that one Mellish would oppose Matthews for the nomination,[102] a suggestion that the Liberals' national secretary viewed as proof of failure to include a sufficient number of Progressives within the Liberal inner circle,[103] Matthews himself continued to maintain "that there was the most complete harmony."[104] When the selection actually occurred in November 1934, well in advance of the actual election date,[105] J.E. Matthews was nominated by acclamation. According to the Sun, local

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100. Each side, for example, had formed its own youth wing. Ibid., vol. 199, 170119-21, Crerar to King, February 16, 1934

101. QUA, T.A. Crerar Papers, ser. III, box 121, Crerar to N. Lambert, June 5, 1934

102. Ibid., Crerar to N. Lambert, August 2, 1934. Liberal strategists believed that Matthews was the best candidate.

103. Ibid., N. Lambert to Crerar, November 12, 1934

104. Ibid., Crerar to N. Lambert, November 15, 1934

105. Matthews, himself, was fearful that the issue of the label--Liberal or Liberal Progressive--might divide that convention. "The matter, however, was never referred to, although probably half the delegates from rural polls were of Progressive leanings. In getting out the posters calling the convention, it was announced as being held under the auspices of the Brandon Federal Liberal Association. In nominating without question the President of that organization we felt that our Progressive friends played the game, and that it was a recognition of the judgement exercised by our executive for several years past." PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 209, 179956, J.E. Matthews to King, April 23, 1935

106. Mrs. Ida Clingan of Virden was one of those several people whose names were presented. All but Matthews, whose nomination was seconded by Mrs. G.R. Rowe of Brandon, declined. Brandon Daily Sun, November 28, 1934. Women were playing only a rather nominal role in the local Liberal party in 1934.

Liberals believed that "the next federal election fight in this constituency will be won or lost in the city of Brandon..."[107] and the nomination of Matthews, a well known city resident, would undoubtedly affect Beaubier's strength in Brandon itself--where the Conservative nominee had secured a 2,000 vote majority in 1930. The 1935 federal election was almost certain to be a most interesting one for Brandon voters.

As in many constituencies in 1935, four parties were represented in the Brandon riding. The alienation of Bennett's Minister of Trade and Commerce, H.H. Stevens, had led eventually to the formation of the Reconstruction Party--a party dedicated in part to the protection of small business interests. This party, according to Beaubier, had sent two organizers into the Brandon constituency, and Stevens clubs had been formed in Reston, Souris, Virden and Brandon. Their first choice for candidate was James Turner, the president of the Provincial Exhibition Board and a very prominent farmer from the Carroll district. However, Turner, who had not been present at the nominating convention, declined.[108] Subsequently, Cecil Leech, the young twenty-eight year old owner of Leech Printing, a Brandon firm, stood instead. He did not, however, conduct a very vigorous campaign--at least in the opinion of the admittedly unsympathetic Brandon Sun.[109]

The newly formed CCF chose an equally young twenty-eight year old Justice area farmer, Harry Wood, over Alderman Harry Spafford (the I.L.P. candidate in 1932) to be their first candidate in Brandon. While only sixty-seven accredited delegates had attended their convention[110] and although all campaign funds had to be raised locally,[111] the CCF launched a vigorous campaign. In fact, in their enthusiasm they decided to hold public meetings (in Brandon's north end) on Sundays which resulted in a stinging rebuke against this violation of the Sabbath from the Salvation Armyist M.L.A. George Dinsdale, who was campaigning actively for his party's candidate.[112] The Sabbatarian movement, which had once been so strong, had not totally died!

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[107] Ibid., January 8, 1935

[108] Ibid., September 21, 1935

[109] Ibid., October 13, 1935

As Beaubier perceived correctly, the contest between him and Matthews, the Liberal candidate, was very close--"with, perhaps, the balance favouring the Liberals at present."[113] The Conservatives' greatest weakness was, in his opinion, "the lack of confidence within our ranks...which is probably due to the prevalent discontented feeling and the election examples we have seen in some of the Provinces."[114] While Beaubier's support may have been largely personal, as Dr. R.J. Manion later suggested,[115] he made no effort to disassociate himself from his party in 1935. Dr. Manion; Senator Iva Campbell Fallis--the second female member of the Senate; the Hon. Robert Weir, Minister

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110. Ibid., May 30, 1935

111. Each poll was committed to raising twelve dollars for Wood's campaign expenses.

112. Brandon Daily Sun, September 19, 1935

113. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 491, 307057, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, August 26, 1935

114. Ibid.

115. At the time of Beaubier's death, Dr. Manion, then the national leader of the Conservative party, attributed the former Brandon member's election in 1935 to "his great personal charm and quiet ability...." Brandon Daily Sun, January 4, 1939

of Agriculture; and finally, Prime Minister Bennett, whose Brandon meeting was attended by an estimated 4,500 people, campaigned on Beaubier's behalf.

Colonel David Beaubier was one of only forty Conservative M.P.'s to be elected in 1935 and the only Manitoba Conservative to survive that debacle. Even his victory over fellow city resident J.E. Matthews was by the very slim margin of 6,575 to 6,368--a scant 207 votes. Harry Wood, the CCF nominee, was a relatively strong third with 3,396 which was a marked improvement over Beatrice Brigden's 1,331 votes in 1930. Cecil Leech, the Reconstructionist, polled only 556 votes (237 of which were from Brandon)--an indication, perhaps, that the voters believed his campaign to be a token gesture.

Beaubier, himself, subsequently attributed the Bennett government's defeat to the "unfortunate economic conditions" of the past few years which had been particularly significant "in rural sections where repeated failures have occurred";[116] to the Conservative failure to publicize their own accomplishments adequately; to the hostile Sifton press; and to the election eve appointments to party stalwarts which had led many to believe that the government expected to be defeated.[117] However, the situation in the Brandon constituency was somewhat different: economic conditions in the agriculturally diversified Brandon area were slightly improved over many other communities in 1935; Brandon

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116. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 206, 135235, D.W. Beaubier to Bennett, October 18, 1935

117. Ibid. It is interesting to note that observers, Beaubier included, did not indicate that Bennett's "New Deal" was a factor in the 1935 election.

Conservatives had kept their organization intact and active;[118] the Brandon Daily Sun, unlike the hostile Sifton press, was friendly; the response of city voters (77%), the source of Beaubier's greatest strength, exceeded that of the rural portion of the constituency (73%) which was to the incumbent's advantage;[119] Beaubier's personal appeal was undoubtedly an advantage;[120] the apparent ineffectiveness of the local Reconstructionist campaign probably was significant for Beaubier as Tory candidates elsewhere reportedly were hurt badly by H.H. Stevens and company;[121] and Beaubier, in addition, was somewhat "lucky" that the extensive CCF gains, which were made largely at the expense of the Conservatives (i.e., particularly the Ukrainian and the railway vote in 1935[122]), just failed to allow the Liberal candidate (despite his disappointing total vote[123]) to "slip in." Consequently, in spite of the fact that the Liberals had astutely selected a popular city resident who had campaigned particularly vigourously in Brandon itself, Beaubier still won the largest share of that urban vote with 2,713 votes to Matthews's 2,223 and, consequently, the election—in that he trailed Matthews in the rural vote. As a result, the Brandon M.P., despite a total loss of almost 2,000 votes, managed to escape the Conservative disaster of 1935. Brandon in 1935 was--which was most unusual--out of step with the rest of the nation and that, it would appear, was due to the peculiar local circumstances.

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[118] It should be remembered that Beaubier was one of the few M.P.'s to campaign actively in the 1932 provincial election and George Dinsdale, Brandon's M.L.A., returned that favour in 1935. Beaubier was also careful to ensure that the public was well aware of what the Conservative were doing for Brandon. For example, he wrote to council early in 1935 outlining the several projects on which federal monies had been expended and asking for more suggestions. Brandon Daily Sun, March 22, 1935

[119] While there were only 8,896 voters in Brandon as contrasted with 13,368 in the rest of the constituency, the larger urban "turn-out" could be significant in a close contest. The overall response in the Brandon constituency was 75%, which was a significant decline from 1930 (79%) and 1926 (86%). Ibid., October 15, 1935

[120] The importance of David Beaubier's personal appeal is suggested by the fact that the Conservatives failed to hold this seat after his death.

[121] The Conservative candidate in Portage believed that two-thirds of the Reconstructionist vote in his constituency was ex-Conservative. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 206, 135281, W.H. Burn to Bennett, October 24, 1935

[122] Ibid., 135330, J.L. Bowman to Bennett, October 23, 1935; ibid., 135220, R.R. Pattison to Rod Finlayson, October 18, 1935

Just as federal politics in Brandon in 1935 remained seemingly unchanged, the pattern of municipal politics was essentially unaltered at this midpoint in the Depression. The number of persons on relief was still on the increase and the city's costs were rising sharply.[124] However, it was hoped that the greatest percentage of the annual relief bill could be funded as long-term debt, a procedure which would lessen the city's most immediate obligations.[125] However, tax collections had declined by some $101,000 in mid 1935 from the corresponding total of the year before, and the council, as a result, began to consider the alternatives available to them. The cities of St. James and St. Boniface had already applied for a provincially appointed financial supervisor whose duty it was to approve all civic expenditures. While the Hon. E.A. McPherson, the Municipal Commissioner, believed that Brandon might yet be able to cope with its own problems,[126] the request for a similar appointment, as events proved, was merely postponed.

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[123] Despite the vigorous campaign by this local resident, Matthews still polled fewer votes (i.e., 6,368 as contrasted to 6,457) than Crerar had in 1930. This is particularly interesting in light of the fact that the Liberals elsewhere were making "marked progress" in 1935. Presumably, some of that Liberal vote went CCF in Brandon in 1935.

[124] In June 1934, 2,453 people had received assistance, a number that was increased to 2,677 one year later. Brandon Daily Sun, July 16, 1935. The cost to the city for relief neared the $200,000 mark by the year's end. Ibid., December 14, 1935

[125] An estimated $75,000 of the year's relief costs would hopefully be funded. Ibid., May 8, 1935. However, no agreement was reached. As the city's relief bill was rising drastically, Brandon was in desperate circumstances by year's end.

The municipal elections in 1935 were rather uneventful which probably explains why only an estimated 42% of the electorate went to the polls. Mayor Cater, despite the frequent conflicts with council, was challenged only by a seemingly weak James Giddings, the former chairman of the relief committee who had trailed the aldermanic field in 1934. That Cater should have been allowed to achieve what proved to be an easy victory by a vote of 2,369 to 829[127] is surprising. Perhaps the fact that the city's financial crisis had not yet reached its disastrous peak is significant. In the meantime, one of the few interesting features of this particular municipal election was the election, as alderman, of Mrs. Rhoda Tennant, the wife of a C.P.R. employee, who became the sixth "railway member" of that ten member council--and the first ever female alderman! That Brandon was a

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[126] Ibid., August 13, 1935

[127] Ibid., November 27, 1935

"railway town" was certainly evident in terms of the nature of municipal leadership![128]

Manitoba, in 1936, had reached a low point in its history. Unable to cope with rapidly escalating relief costs, the provincial government pleaded with Ottawa to come to its rescue by accepting one-half of the costs of relief. As Ottawa would provide more monies only on the condition that Manitoba reduce its deficit to less than a million dollars, strict economic measures and a controversial 2% wage tax were introduced--by necessity. Those were grim days[129] and the 1936 provincial election occurred in their very midst.

Brandon's own position, by 1936, was even more serious. Relief costs had reached another new high in 1935 while tax revenues continued to decline. As a result, the operating deficit for 1935 had totalled $1,68,641.69.[130] Yet, the Brandon Taxpayers' Association, led by a prominent Conservative lawyer, N.W. Kerr, succeeded in persuading council, in early 1936, to reduce the local taxation rate from 41 1/2 to 40 mills.[131]

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[128] The predominance of railway employees in Brandon's municipal politics was evident throughout the 1930s and it is interesting to note that the number of railway people on council was disproportionately high, at least according to Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures. While DBS listed 3,038 employment positions in Brandon, only 413 were related to the railway industry. Thus, 60% of the aldermen were drawn from 13.3% of the labour force. However, it should be noted that the railway employees did constitute the largest single employee group and they, as a group, were the third highest paid. These two reasons might help explain their exceedingly high political profile. Ibid., September 27, 1937. The average salaries in Brandon for 1936 were listed as follows: finance, insurance--$1,835; professional--$1,486; railways--$1,261; discouraged industries--$752; unskilled labourers--$240; trades--$1,022; and clerical--$1,056. The average annual salary in Brandon in 1936 was $834. Ibid.

[129] Morton, Manitoba A History, 426

[130] Brandon Daily Sun, April 3, 1936

[131] Ibid., April 15, 1936

When council attempted to cut costs by discharging three employees of the Sanitation Department, relief workers went out on strike until council finally agreed to the Sanitation Department employees' re-appointment.[132] When the city's request for the sale of debentures was refused by provincial authorities in the spring of 1936, this hapless council voted five to four in favour of the appointment of a provincially appointed administrator--which would mean the temporary abolition of local elected government.[133] As that recommendation was bitterly opposed by the I.L.P. aldermen and others on the grounds that it would destroy "democratic rights,"[134] the provincial government decided to defer any decision until after the 1936 provincial election. Municipal issues could, of course, be very politically significant under such circumstances.

While the continuing Depression and the 2% wage tax appear to have been the prevailing issues throughout most of the province,[135] there were additional local issues of significance in Brandon. In fact, this 1936 contest appears to have consisted primarily of a debate among the three candidates--George Dinsdale, the incumbent Conservative; Dr. H.O. McDiarmid, the Liberal-Progressive; and Alderman Harry Spafford, who was now in this second bid for provincial office the nominee of the CCF--as to who could do the most for Brandon. Brandon politicians apparently believed that the city's self-interest was of primary importance in 1936.

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132. Ibid., May 5, 1936

133. Ibid., June 2, 1936

134. The I.L.P., for instance, organized a public protest meeting after council opted for the appointment of an administrator, rather than a financial supervisor. Ibid., June 18, 1936. The loss of the franchise was one of the major objections raised at that meeting.

135. Morton, Manitoba A History, 426-27

George Dinsdale, the incumbent, presumably enjoyed an advantage in this election, although the Conservative M.L.A. does not appear to have been a particularly active or "strong" man in the legislature. Despite the fact that he was one of only ten Conservatives elected in 1932, the Brandon M.L.A. had received very little publicity during his four years in the house,[136] even though the Brandon Sun was a pro-Conservative newspaper. While Dinsdale's role in the legislative assembly was somewhat limited, he had maintained a high political profile at the constituency level as demonstrated by his prominent efforts on Beaubier's behalf in the 1935 election. Dinsdale, who--in the words of the Tribune--was "popular and highly esteemed in his city...,"[137] stressed "the fair deal he has always given the city" and "his early experiences in Brandon. That he had been a long time in public life was due to the confidence the citizens had in his ability to give a fair deal to everyone, whether friend or opponent."[138]

Dr. H.O. McDiarmid, a resident physician in Brandon for twenty-seven years and a member of one of the city's most renowned families,[139] was the Liberal-Progressive nominee in 1936. The main thrust of this government candidate's argument was that Brandon had lacked representation in the cabinet for too long; that the city had suffered as a result; and that his election would, thus, benefit the community immensely.[140] Premier Bracken stressed the same theme when he was reported to have stated, while speaking in Brandon, that "he is quite sure that it is not in the best interests of this city to be without government representation."[141] While McDiarmid, as a government candidate, attempted to appeal to the community's self-interest, he also had to contend with what proved to be a widespread dissatisfaction with the Bracken government's record in the recent past. The 2% wage tax was obviously the most damaging feature of that history and, in this instance, McDiarmid proclaimed his objections as vehemently as any other candidate with the additional claim that he alone of the three candidates could persuade Bracken to repeal the hated measure![142] While Dinsdale had used the proverbial slogan "It's time for a change" to express discontent with the Bracken government in this depression era election, McDiarmid focused more directly on the local political situation by stressing "It's Time for a Change in Brandon."[143]

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[136] Admittedly, he had been a determined opponent to any relaxation of the liquor laws, even to the sale of "soft drinks" in beer parlors as that might attract young people to the premises. Brandon Daily Sun, April 26, 1933. He had opposed the establishment of a Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba as it would jeopardize the future of the Normal School in Brandon. Ibid., February 21, 1935. However, his most publicized accomplishment, at least as identified by newspaper writers at the time of his death in 1943, had been to begin the practice of the singing of "God Save the King" at the end of the annual legislative session. Winnipeg Free Press, September 21, 1943; Winnipeg Tribune, September 21, 1943

[137] Ibid.

[138] Brandon Daily Sun, July 25, 1936

[139] PAM, Manitoba Biographies, Winnipeg Free Press, January 5, 1952

Alderman Harry Spafford, the CCF candidate who was renominated in 1936 without opposition--although the names of Dr. D.L. Johnson and Miss

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[140] One of McDiarmid's advertisements read as follows:

> "Vote for Your City and Help Yourself. Support the Government, then see that they support Brandon."

Brandon Daily Sun, July 25, 1936

[141] *Ibid.*, July 14, 1936

[142] *Ibid.*, July 25, 1935

[143] *Ibid.*

Viola Hanwell had also been mentioned,[144] focused less on "local" issues than ony other candidate. For example, Alderman Spafford spoke of the danger of war that hung over Western Europe and how such war could be prevented by the abolition of the profit system.[145] While Spafford's campaign was somewhat locally oriented in that he strongly opposed council's appeal for the appointment of an administrator--"the first steps towards a dictatorship in Brandon"[146]--and as he stressed his own record of civic service, his appeal to the self interest of Brandon voters seems to have been less evident than that of his two opponents--and it may, as a result, have been less politically effective!

Certainly the results of the 1936 election in Brandon suggest that the electors chose between those two candidates who could most likely benefit Brandon. Dinsdale, whose first ballot strength (2,647) was identical to that of 1932, won re-election despite a much stronger showing by the Liberal-Progressive nominee (i.e., 2,042 as contrasted with 1,423). Spafford, who had placed second in 1932 (with 1,574 votes), was now a distant third (with 1,300).[147] As his party had little or no chance of achieving political power, the CCF nominee's support was probably limited to the "party faithful."[148] Why then Dinsdale rather than McDiarmid? There could be several explanations. Dinsdale, an incumbent with a long record of service at the municipal level, undoubtedly had earned a considerable amount of personal support. He enjoyed, in addition, the continuing support of the *Brandon Sun*, a seemingly significant political factor in Brandon itself. He undoubtedly benefitted from the widespread public dissatisfaction with the 2% wage tax and from the "protest" vote that resulted.[149] Finally, he was a member of a very credible political party in 1936 which could conceivably form the next government--as demonstrated by the fact that they did win sixteen (as contrasted with Bracken's twenty-two) seats in that election. Therefore, those who were inclined to vote "ministerialist" could understandably, albeit mistakenly, vote for Dinsdale. As a result, Brandon constituency remained beyond the political "pale" in 1936--partially as a result of local political factors.

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[144] Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 11, 1936

[145] Ibid. Spafford's candidature in 1936 was also unique in that there was the difficult question of his relationship with another political force--i.e., the Communist Party. While Spafford believed that the issue of an "united front" with the local Communists would have to be decided by the local CCF executive, he reportedly "saw no difficulty in working with the communist party." Ibid.

[146] Brandon Daily Sun, July 11, 1936

[147] Winnipeg Evening Tribune, July 28, 1936

Once that provincial election was safely passed, the Bracken government, re-inforced by the coalition with the newly elected Social Credit

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[148] An interesting feature of Spafford's vote was the fact that most of the minority who indicated a second choice--as 811 Spafford supporters "plumped" singly for their man--preferred Dinsdale (327) to McDiarmid (162). *Brandon Daily Sun*, July 28, 1936. Why this should be so is not known, except that one could suggest that both the CCF and Conservative nominees were, to some degree, "protest" candidates. However, a second "interesting" feature of this election was that Spafford trailed McDiarmid in three north end polls by substantial amounts. *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, July 28, 1936. Could Spafford's association with the Communist party in an "united front" have hurt politically in that ethnic area of the city or was it due, as Dinsdale later charged, to the fact that McDiarmid supporters promised jobs at the Shilo military base to the north end residents--if they voted Liberal-Progressive? *Brandon Daily Sun*, March 5, 1937

[149] It is important to remember that Bracken's Liberal-Progressives suffered a "stinging defeat" in 1936 as they fell from thirty-eight to twenty-two seats. Morton, *Manitoba: a History*, 425,427

M.L.A.'s, proceeded to resolve the question of the future administration of Brandon. Their decision, announced in early October, was to appoint the former provincial treasurer, E.A. McPherson, as financial supervisor--rather than as administrator--for Brandon. As a result, civic elections which many had anticipated would not be necessary still had to be conducted in late 1936. While seven aldermanic candidates went before the electorate, only 20% of the voters responded--reportedly an "all time low."[150] The results were not particularly noteworthy except in that William Forsyth, an I.L.P. nominee and a locomotive engineer, won election to maintain the number of railway employees on council at six as Alderman Grant, another railway man and chairman of the relief committee, was rather decisively defeated. The Depression was certainly of political significance for those aldermen who had the misfortune to be elected chairman of council's relief committee!![151]

Fortunately, the economic impact of that Depression was beginning to ease somewhat by late 1936-early 1937. Total relief costs for 1936 were $186,111,30, a slight decrease from 1936's total of $201,894,34. When a relief assistance registration occurred in the early fall of 1937, 465 family heads were receiving assistance as contrasted with 497 in 1936 and with 518 in 1934.[152] In fact, there were fewer people on relief in Brandon in August 1937 than in any month since 1933 and Brandon families were actually donating locally grown vegetables to the more destitute in Saskatchewan.[153] Perhaps the tide had begun to change locally.

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[150] It is interesting to note that while 4,760 women were enumerated in 1936 in comparison to 4,254 males, 309 more men than women voted in that election. Brandon Daily Sun, December 2, 1936

[151] James Gidding, a former chairman, had lost initially in 1934; he had been easily conquered by Cater in 1935; he was again defeated in 1936, although he did at least place sixty with 723 votes. Grant was last with 620.

[152] Brandon Daily Sun, September 24, 1937

The city's financial position in 1937 had also improved substantially. Brandon's share of relief costs had been reduced from 40% to 25% which meant a considerable decline in local financial responsibility. However, Brandon's financial difficulties in the 1930s, as the Brandon Sun repeatedly explained, were largely due to the excessive spending and borrowings in the 1920s--the so-called Cater era. Interest charges in 1937 alone totalled $88,812.34 while an additional $56,962.39 in debenture payments were due that year. In fact, the total monies payable by the city in 1937--interest and capital--totalled $190,424.04.[154] Despite Mayor Cater's attempts to veto the decision, council--with the support of the financial supervisor--proceeded in 1937 to default on interest payments and to omit sinking fund payments.[155] Temporarily freed of those previously accumulated obligations, the city, guided by the economy minded financial supervisor,[156] was able to meet most of its current obligations in 1937. In fact, McPherson reported that all but 12 of the city's 400 overdue accounts had been settled by October 1.[157] Council, in addition, displayed more "guts" than previously in dealing with

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[153] Ibid., September 18, 1937

[154] Ibid., February 27, 1937

[155] Ibid., March 16, 1937. E.A. McPherson doubted that Mayor Cater's veto would still be legally effective as the final authority on civic expenditures in Brandon now rested with the provincial Municipal and Public Utility Board.

[156] McPherson, for example, vetoed the purchase of the traditional City Hall Christmas tree in 1937. Ibid., December 21, 1937

[157] Ibid., October 1, 1937

with pressure groups such as the Brandon Unemployed Association. Perhaps the support of the financial supervisor explains why council, after much vacillation in the past, "stuck" to its decision to reduce relief rates to "summer levels" in 1937, despite another relief workers strike.[158] 1937 was a year of hard--but probably beneficial--decisions.

While the city's slightly improved financial position may partly explain the fact that twenty-six candidates stood for municipal office in 1937, the financial crisis of the previous months undoubtedly was politically significant for the veteran Mayor Harry Cater who found himself in a three-way mayoralty race. Cater had opposed the request for a financial supervisor in 1936, a request that surely reflected upon his extensive record as Brandon's first magistrate. The financial supervisor had been appointed and the city, in 1937, had defaulted on those financial obligations which had been incurred during Cater's mayoralty. Confronted by these civic decisions which he had opposed and conscious perhaps that his own health was failing,[159] the sixty-eight year old municipal leader apparently realized that he was in political difficulty. His response, designed presumably to divert the public's attention, was to unleash a well publicized anti-"Red" scare campaign. Thus, he repeatedly warned Brandonites during the ensuing weeks that "the Communist group, with members of other groups, appear to be making a decided effort to get control of your City Council and

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[158] Ibid., June 2, 1937

[159] Ibid., November 2, 1937

School Board for the next two years."[160] Admittedly, two school board candidates in 1937--S. Forkin of the Brandon Unemployed Association and the popular medical practioner D.L. Johnson--were or became Communists: however, there is no evidence to indicate that they constituted the threat to Brandon that Cater claimed. Cater's primary target seems to have been the "Civic Unity Committee" which endorsed several candidates for election--including, in addition to the infamous Forkin and Johnson, Cater's principal mayoralty opponent, Alderman Fred Young.[161]

If Cater hoped that Alderman Young, whom he had defeated twice before,[162] would be victimized by this "guilt by association" charge, he was to be disappointed as Young polled 2,095 votes to Cater's 1,300. It was a stunning defeat for this sixteen year mayoralty veteran who had polled 2,000 plus votes in each (but one[163]) of the ten contested mayoralty elections in which he had participated since 1921 and who only two years before had won re-election by the decisive majority of 2,369 to 829. While the third candidate, Alderman dentist Percy Hughes did poll 765 votes, Cater's defeat could not be explained in terms of a "split vote." In fact, the marked decline in Cater's political strength was even more evident when he stood again two years later.[164] Perhaps,

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[160] Ibid., November 26, 1937. However, most candidates stressed that they were "Independent"; W.G. Gervan was in favour of a "Progressive Council"; while F.H. Johnson declared emphatically: "I am NOT a COMMUNIST." Ibid., November 29, 1937

[161] Ibid.

[162] Young lost to Cater in 1928 and again in 1933.

[163] Cater had defeated Mayor Dinsdale by a vote of only 1,711 to 1,638 in 1921.

[164] In 1939, Cater, with 645 votes, placed third behind Young (who increased his vote sharply to 3,145) and James Kirkcaldy who was second with 1,373.

1937 was--to some degree--simply an inevitable milestone for Brandon's most successful municipal politician. The indefatigable Harry Cater had fallen victim--one suspects--both to the passage of time and to the civic financial crisis which had "peaked" during the Depression.

The economic impact of the Depression upon the community as a whole continued to lessen throughout the next few months. The decline in numbers on relief that had been apparent in 1937 became a trend in 1938: for example, in July 1938, the number on relief were reduced to 2,002 from the previous year's total of 2,168 and the cost had dropped proportionally—from $8,170.44 to $7,423.25. This change was even more apparent when the July 1938 statistics are compared with those of 1935 when 2,508 residents had received a total of $13,072.61 relief dollars.[165] Thus, the Depression was economically less burdensome in 1938--the year of the federal by-election. That difference could presumably be of real political significance.

The federal by-election of November 14, 1938, which was necessitated by the death of Brandon's M.P., Dave Beaubier, was certainly the most important political event in Brandon during that year. It was also a significant political test for the federal political organizations in that each party had a vital interest in the outcome. Brandon had been a Conservative seat since 1930 and this by-election would determine whether the party, under the new leadership of Dr. Manion, could retain the constituency now that Dave Beaubier was gone. The results could also be interpreted as an important local judgement on King's three year old government who would soon go to the polls again. This by-election would, as well, help determine whether the CCF had gained politically during these Depression years. In fact, for a few brief moments the "eyes of the nation" were on this small prairie city.

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[165] Brandon Daily Sun, August 13, 1938.

As is often the case, all three parties believed that they could win the by-election, under the right circumstances. The CCF's provincial organizer, despite his party's third place finish in 1935, was quite hopeful as the party's local organization was reported to be well prepared.

> I really think we can win the seat, I have offered to take charge of organizing poll committee work, and will go out the minute I get word. I have a number of young men and women, who will spend full time on poll work and canvassing, Brandon has its quota of good workers, particularly among the farmers.... Grain prices, particularly course [sic] grains, have the farmers on their ear. King made some swell promises on Brandon platform in '35 that should make nice reading...about prices of machinery.[166]

However, the CCF in Manitoba still had their share of difficulties which could affect the outcome in Brandon. The Independent Labor Party, which had been particularly active in Brandon, announced, in early 1938, that it was severing all connections with the CCF until the latter body would permit them to field their own candidates.[167] As a result, the CCF were forced to reorganize their party structure in 1938 as I.L.P. members had held important committee positions. In addition, as Beatrice Brigden--now the provincial secretary--explained somewhat defensively to the ever pressing David Lewis, the party was experiencing financial difficulties:

> We are trying our very best to get the affiliation fee away to you soon.... You must remember that the

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166. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, H.J. Peddie to M.J. Coldwell, September 5, 1938

167. Brandon Daily Sun, February 7, 1938

> CCF has not had one cent of support from the old Labor movement here.[168]

While the CCF membership in the two Brandon clubs was only 16 in 1938, an increase of 4 from 1937,[169] the fact that Harry Wood, the young Justice area farmer who had polled approximately 3,400 votes in 1935 (and who since had been elected provincial president), was standing for the second time would be of some advantage.[170]

Although many Conservatives believed that they could still hold the Brandon constituency in 1938, despite the death of Dave Beaubier--the sole Manitoba Conservative to survive in 1935, the choice of the candidate was obviously of great significance. While many local people were rumoured to be possibilities,[171] Brandon Conservatives were hopeful that Dr. Manion, their new national leader, would agree to stand--for several reasons.

> First, we believe he would have no trouble winning it, if the election were contested. Second--we felt that he might wish to run in the West. Third--it would greatly help our situation here.
>
> The man who can win the Dominion seat is our present local member, Mr. George Dinsdale, but if he were to resign to contest this by-election we would have two by-elections to fight now and we might lose the second one. Further, we felt that if Dr. Manion is going to contest his own

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[168] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Beatrice Brigden to D. Lewis, May 28, 1938

[169] Ibid., vol. 63

[170] Wood won the nomination by acclamation after Alderman Spafford, Alderman Webb and L.V. Robson of Deleau had declined to stand. Both Spafford and Webb were I.L.P. members. Either the breach between the I.L.P. and the CCF had been healed or those differences had not been as great in Brandon as elsewhere. Brandon Daily Sun, September 26, 1938

[171] George Dinsdale, George Beaubier, Mayor Fred Young, Alderman James Kirkcaldy, ex-Alderman H.A. McNeil and ex-Alderman F.R. Longworth were all mentioned as possible candidates. Ibid., October 4, 1938

> seat in the general election...then this should be the most logical place for him as it would give him an opportunity to get his message to the West now.[172]

When Dr. Manion declined to stand outside of Ontario, George Dinsdale, Brandon's M.L.A., became the preferred alternative. Unfortunately, Dinsdale's cartage firm had a federal mail contract which he could not rearrange in such a way that he could become a candidate for federal office.[173] As a result, Brandon Conservatives were forced to choose from among five local candidates, none of whom had previously stood for provincial or federal office.

George Beaubier, the late member's thirty-four year old son, won the nomination on the second ballot over Mayor Fred Young; Alderman James Kirkcaldy; J.W.M. Thompson, an Elkhorn lawyer; and Wes Pentland, a Justice area farmer. The convention, in the opinion of the local association president, had, at least, chosen the best of those available: "with appeal of family name with youth and speaking ability and good reputation he is the easiest candidate to put over."[174]

Although the Conservatives believed that they had a reasonably good candidate, the local organization was greatly disturbed by the shortage of campaign funds.[175] Money would be a crucial factor in this

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172. Progressive Conservative [PC] Association, file M-B-1, R.L. McQuarrie to J.M. Robb, September 12, 1938

173. Ibid., J.M. Robb to W.H. Barker, October 8, 1938. Barker was the president of the local Conservative Association.

174. Ibid., W.H. Barker to J.M. Robb, October 12, 1938

175. As early as 1936, Manitoba Conservatives had indicated their shortage of funds. Whereas R.B. Bennett himself had been a major contributor at one point, that source and even his influence had now noticeably lessened so that he replied regretfully in 1936 that he could not be of assistance to Manitoba Conservatives. PAC, R.B. Bennett Papers, vol. 838, 521345, Bennett to John T. Haig, July 10, 1936

by-election--at least in the opinion of the new candidate.

> With a proper campaign, I estimate that I have a reasonably good chance of holding the seat for the Conservative Party. We are up against a strong Liberal campaign. Present evidence indicates that they intend to contest this by-election most vigorously and that they have the means to do so.
>
> Our position is simply this--the campaign we will be able to put on will be limited by the means we have at our command. Local contributions are likely to amount to something a little under $500. Your organization has already contributed $500. After carefully budgeting an estimate of expenses with my committee, we conclude the minimum total expense of a proper campaign will be $5,240.00 and whether or not we shall be able to carry on will depend I am sorry to say on what your organization can do for us....[176]

This viewpoint was similar to that presented by Barker, the association president, in his post election explanation.

> From the day you phoned me from Winnipeg, in which you indicated a certain figure, I knew we could not win this by-election. When you consider a constituency thirty-six miles wide by seventy-two miles long, containing twenty-three thousand voters, and when you consider that the two men who knew the organization best--D.W. Beaubier and W.E.E. Taylor--had just passed away, and when you consider that we only had four weeks in which to organize, hold meetings both in halls and radios, frame advertising, and to do this with one organizer, from one Committee room, you can well understand that it was almost an impossible task.[177]

The Conservatives, it would appear, were hurting as they entered this by-election campaign. They were short of money; they had lost the advantage of Dave Beaubier's personal appeal; and they lacked time as they had apparently delayed the nomination until the last possible moment in the hope that either Manion or Dinsdale would stand. In addition, there may also have been some significant division within

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[176] PC Association, file M-B-1, G. Beaubier to J.M. Robb, October 15, 1938

[177] *Ibid.*, file M-M-4, W.H. Barker to J.M. Robb, November 21, 1938

Conservative ranks: at least, the traditionally well-informed T.A. Crerar reported that they were conducting a "weak" campaign and that the 'city' Conservatives are not taking any interest or, at best, very little."[178]

The Liberals, meanwhile, had re-nominated the retired insurance salesman J.E. Matthews, the candidate who had lost by only 200 votes in 1935 and who had apparently been campaigning ever since![179] They had (according to the Tories) the necessary funds and they were well supplied with outside assistance: "All the Liberal Federal members from Manitoba were speaking in the Constituency including several members of the Legislature and Reverend Don McIvor of Fort William and four members of the Cabinet."[180]

Crerar, meanwhile, was most concerned about the CCF campaign and particularly with the two and one half week campaign of M.J. Coldwell who was "both persuasive and unscrupulous"[181] and who was "an expert dealer in half truths."[182] Coldwell was, in Crerar's opinion, "by far our most dangerous opponent."[183] However, the former M.P. for Brandon wss reassured by reports that the CCF, despite gains in some of the rural districts, "will slip in others, and in balance, will not improve their position a great deal...."[184]

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[178] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 248, 212069, Crerar to Howard Henry, November 12, 1938. Why the "city" Conservatives were not vitally involved in that campaign is not revealed and one can only speculate that personality differences may have been a factor. That there were some such internal difficulties was also suggested by a subsequent report by the provincial leader, Errick Willis, who noted that the provincial party had offered the services of their new Ukrainian organizer to the Brandon organization "but to date they have not thought it advisable to accept this offer." PC Association, file M-M-4, E. Willis to J.M. Robb, November 5, 1938

[179] *Ibid.*, E. Willis to J.M. Robb, November 21, 1938

[180] *Ibid.*

[181] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 248, 212069, Crerar to Howard Henry, November 28, 1938

[182] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 35, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, November 22, 1938

Crerar's political assessment, as was so often the case, proved to be quite accurate. Harry Wood, the Justice area farmer, polled 3,577 votes in 1938, which was only a very slight increase over his 1935 total of 3,396. George Beaubier, the Conservative, received 5,600 votes, a marked decline from his father's 1935 total of 6,575. J.E. Matthews, the Liberal, won with 6,580 votes which was a slight increase over the 6,368 total that he had accumulated three years before. It is interesting to note that Beaubier's best showing was in the rural areas where he lost to Matthews by a vote of 3,296 to 3,552, results that were quite comparable with those of 1935.[185] The chief issue in the farm sector had been the fixed floor price for wheat which the Liberals had set at 80¢ per bushel while the Conservatives had promised $1.00.[186] It was the city--which Matthews now won by a vote of 3,058 to 2,391--that had reversed itself. Dave Beaubier had won Brandon itself in each of his four campaigns but his son, George, was badly defeated in those same urban polls in 1938.

Several hundred former Conservative supporters had either switched parties or stayed at home. The question was why? The Conservatives maintained that they had campaigned as strenuously as they possibly could: they had organized twenty-five public meetings; there were ten fifteen minute radio broadcasts; and "we did everything we could on Election Day."[187] According to the local association president, the Conservatives had encountered great difficulty in attempting to refute the Liberal argument that "it is better to elect a Government representative when the Government is in power"[188] and certainly those who wished to cast a "ministerialist" vote had no difficulty in determining their choice in this by-election when the future of the government was not at stake. Barker also noted, as did other observers, that the Conservatives had suffered severe losses in the city's north end--just as they had done in the 1936 provincial election:

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[183] Ibid.

[184] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 248, 212069 Crerar to Howard Henry, November 12, 1938

[185] Note that these "unofficial" electoral statistics were published immediately after the election. Brandon Daily Sun, November 15, 1938

[186] PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 35, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, November 22, 1938

> ...the north side of the City was very bad for us and we knew that it would be, because you have to have money in order to secure votes there. It is populated by Ukrainians and Poles, and here are the results, 1935,--Beaubier 240, Matthews 210, Wood 298. 1938--Beaubier 156, Matthews 530, Wood 232. The city outside of the North side was as follows: 1935--Beaubier 2,470, Matthews 2,023, Wood 1,442. 1938--Beaubier 2,235, Matthews 2,528, Wood 1,143.[189]

The unsuccessful George Beaubier explained his loss of his "father's seat" in somewhat similar terms:

> Evidently their [sic] was too much money and too many jobs against us since a preliminary survey, of the results indicates that the foreign and railway vote in the City of Brandon determined the defeat. We actually made good gains in normally Liberal rural polls and did well generally throughout all rural parts of the riding except in Rivers where we were up against the TCA airport prospect with its jobs and money.[190]

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[187] PC Association, file M-M-4, W.H. Barker to J.M. Robb, November 21, 1938

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid., G. Beaubier to J.M. Robb, November 15, 1938

Beaubier's reference to the railway vote particularly interested Dr. John Robb, the Conservative's national organizer, as the attitude of that sizeable segment of the electorate could have widespread implications for the party--if there was, in fact, a real estrangement between the Conservatives and the railway vote.

> I know the C.N.R. and particularly the Grits are putting out propaganda that Dr. Manion did this or that to Thornton. What strikes me, is that this advance poll in 1935 stood Conservative 40, Liberals 46, C.C.F. 49 and in your election stood 27, 25 and 28. ...so that if the advanced poll was composed of railway men I can see no reason why we should feel depressed about that vote.[191]

Beaubier, in response, noted that there was a marked difference, at least within Brandon, between the C.N.R. and C.P.R. vote.

> ...the C.P.R. vote appears to have been mainly favorable. In the three polls in which most of the C.P.R. families live, two of them gave us a small majority; the other we lost by six votes (Cons. 122, Lib. 128, C.C.F. 52).
>
> On the other hand, in the two polls which we call the C.N.R. polls they went strongly Liberal but, strangely enough, at the expense of the C.C.F. for our vote in these two polls was only 37 less than in 1935 when the C.C.F. was 71 less than in 1935.
>
> As far as the advance poll is concerned, it would be mainly a C.P.R. and not a C.N.R. vote in Brandon. There must be twice as many C.P.R. men as there are C.N.R. men here.... I have never heard any C.P.R. men complain about Dr. Manion but, of course, there are plenty that do among the C.N.R. people, and they get lots of help in complaining too.[192]

Thus, the decision of some city electors who may well have voted for jobs and in order to be on the government side of the house had been important, if not crucial, to that election.[193] Self-interest plus the personal popularity of the candidate Matthews--rather than newspaper support--appear to have been the most politically significant factors in Brandon in 1938.

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[191] Ibid., J.M. Robb to G. Beaubier, November 19, 1938

[192] Ibid., G. Beaubier to J.M. Robb, November 21, 1938

The municipal elections, which occurred just two weeks after the federal by-election, proved to be a rather anti-climatic and separate facet of the city's political process in 1938. As noted previously, the economic impact of the Depression was lessening: the city was able to increase both civic salaries[194] and relief rates[195] to a small degree; the decision to defer interest and capital payments on the city's long-term debt was extended for another year--which freed more dollars for short-term needs; and, essentially, events unfolded undramatically under the supervision of O.L. Harwood, the new financial supervisor,[196] and

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193. Beaubier had stressed the nation's interest in the campaign in reply to Liberal appeals to self-interest: "My first consideration will be for Canada, and then for the constituency of Brandon." Brandon Daily Sun, October 27, 1938. "The Liberals have said 'vote for a government candidate and get something for Brandon' but he [Beaubier] said he would rather see Brandon give something to Canada." Ibid. One has the feeling that Beaubier's "patriotism" fell mainly on deaf ears!

194. The Municipal and Public Utility Board approved the expenditure of $10,000 to allow council to restore a portion of the earlier salary cuts. Ibid., November 5, 1938

195. Food allowances were increased by 10% in 1938 after S. Forkin had led another of his many delegations to city council. However, the pressures placed upon the relief committee were such that Alderman Webb, a member of the I.L.P., resigned the committee chairmanship early in 1938. Ibid., January 18, 1938. Undoubtedly, Alderman Webb was quite conscious of the political fate that had befallen two of the previous chairmen.

196. E.A. McPherson had been appointed Chief Justice of Manitoba's Court of Kings Bench. O.L. Harwood, a resident of Brandon since 1899, had been an active member of the community's business and volunteer life for many years. However, as he had not played any apparent political role, he was an acceptable choice for this position. Ibid., December 4, 1937

and in the absence of Harry Cater! While ten candidates, including that same Harry Cater, entered the aldermanic race, the results were not particularly noteworthy. The status of the I.L.P. remained unaltered as Alderman Webb was a successful fifth place finisher.[197] Fellow I.L.P. candidate W.P. Kearns, however, was a distant ninth. The Depression seemingly had neither assisted nor hindered the political fortunes of the I.L.P. at the municipal level. Harry Cater's defeat--with 1,290 votes--simply reinforces the supposition expressed earlier that this veteran politician's personal career was drawing to a close.

1939, and the outbreak of World War II, marked the end of the Depression and the end of an era. Many young men would secure their first steady job in the Canadian Army as Canada reacted quickly to the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. While many individuals undoubtedly continued to feel the effects of the 1930s for some time, the War almost immediately replaced the Depression as the predominant feature of life in late 1939.

Most political observers had expected that there would be a federal election in 1939, probably in October. However, J.E. Matthews, Brandon's newly elected M.P. who had been awarded the honour of moving the reply to the Speech from the Throne at the start of the 1939 session, was greatly disturbed at the prospect of this election. In fact, he reported that he had not been able to

> ...find one individual who favoured an election this year.
> I found a fairly general feeling of approbation for the government, a feeling that progress has been made

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[197] Webb, who had earlier resigned the chairmanship of the relief committee, polled 1,477 votes well in advance of the 1,347 total of the sixth place contender and considerably behind the fourth place finisher's 1,725. Ibid., November 30, 1938

> in the face of many hurdles that had to be overcome. Should something happen [to?] the western crop it would mean a psychology, perhaps difficult to analyze, but one that would express itself definitely C.C.F. or Social Credit....
> Collectors are on every doorstep in the fall of the year, and people simply will not attend meetings during the harvest and threshing seasons. Several falls in recent years side roads became blocked the latter part of October. We were singularly fortunate last fall in that roads kept open until after the by-elections of November 14th.
> The results of the trade treaties are not yet sufficiently in evidence to have made real impact. Many have expressed the thought that all those points could be co-ordinated and a successfully aggressive campaign carried on next spring say for the last week in June when most people are much more optimistic than in the fall. Here also unemployment is still quite bad.[198]

However, it was World War II, and not the advice of Brandon's new M.P., that was to influence Mackenzie King.

Certainly the Conservatives had expected a federal election in the autumn of 1939 and the search for the right candidate--"there is only one kind of a man we want, that is a winner"[199]--had begun immediately upon the conclusion of the 1938 by-election. A Conservative M.L.A., such as George Dinsdale, would be an attractive federal candidate. "The general feeling is that if George Dinsdale took the convention there would be no question as to the result. If he is not going to be our Candidate then the riding will be more or less in doubt."[200] However, the "elevation" of M.L.A.'s to become federal candidates could obviously weaken the provincial party, a danger of which federal party

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198. PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 274, 232569-70, J.E. Matthews to King, June 22, 1939

199. PC Association, file M-M-6, J.M. Robb to W. Miller, April 14, 1939. W. Miller was the Conservative's provincial organizer in Manitoba.

200. Ibid.

party officials were aware: "In view of the fact that there was a possibility of George Dinsdale leaving the Provincial field I was inclined to oppose the selection of any of our other Provincial members as I thought this would be sacrifice enough on the part of Eric Willis...."[201] Dinsdale, who was encouraged most strongly by the federal organization in Ottawa, did agree to stand after his federal mail contract had been transferred successfully to a son.[202] Then, on April 15, just five days before the convention, Finlayson reported that it would be Beaubier (for whom there was no apparent enthusiasm)--rather than Dinsdale. As the disappointed Finlayson reported, real limitations were placed in the way of those who sought to "organize" politics: "After all the [constituency] organization does the nominating job and what an organizer in Manitoba can do about it or for that matter an organizer at Ottawa is limited by considerations of political loyalty."[203] Dinsdale, who obviously wanted to run federally, would not do so without the concurrence of Willis, the provincial Conservative leader.

The inter-relationship between provincial and federal politics was clearly evident in this instance as Brandon Conservatives attempted to field the one candidate who, they believed, could win in the next election. However, Eric Willis, the provincial Conservative leader, feared that the federal party often failed to perceive fully the significance of this inter-relationship: in his opinion, the Manitoba Conservatives' failure in 1932 provincial election undoubtedly

> ...assisted our Federal defeat in 1935, and, consequently it appears inadvisable to bet all

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201. Ibid., file M-M-3a, J.M. Robb to R.K. Finlayson, April 4, 1939

202. Ibid., file M-M-5, J.M. Robb to W. Miller, April 14, 1939

203. Ibid., file M-M-3a, R.K. Finlayson to J.M. Robb.

> our money either on the Federal or the Provincial election....
> I think it was essential that George Dinsdale become a Federal candidate, and I think we can win the Provincial seat with another candidate, but I do think we must continue to work in complete harmony and not wreck our chances either Provincially or Federally.[204]

As Willis had agreed, albeit reluctantly, George Dinsdale did stand for--and win--the Conservative nomination on April 20, 1939.

However, the fact that Dinsdale was opposed for that nomination by two men--John W. Thompson, the Elkhorn lawyer; and Mayor Fred Young, the latter being proposed by George Beaubier[205]--suggests that Brandon Conservatives were considerably divided on the question of choice of candidate. There probably was, as the provincial organizer had hinted, significant opposition to this attempt by outsiders "to handpick" the local candidate. Nevertheless, the nomination of George Dinsdale, the federal party's first choice, had been secured and the local association had even received the seemingly significant sum of $300 with which to begin their campaign.[206] Despite their internal difficulties, the Conservatives were exceptionally well prepared for this 1939 election that was never to be.

Suddenly, dark clouds darkened the Conservatives' horizon. First of all, there was a disturbing report that their candidate, George Dinsdale, was unwell.[207] Secondly, the outbreak of hostilities in Europe totally disrupted all campaign plans. The parties themselves declared an immediate political truce and the plans for an election were shelved (or supposedly so). As Dr. John Robb, who was returning to the business world for this interim period, lamented:

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[204] Ibid., file M-M-4, E. Willis to J.M. Robb, May 1, 1939

[205] Ibid., file M-B-1, Morgan W.R. John to J.M. Robb, April 21, 1939

[206] Finlayson believed that this advance of $300 was very important as "it emphasizes the importance of getting their shirt sleeves rolled up at the beginning." Ibid., file M-M-3a, R.K. Finlayson to J.M. Robb, April 25, 1939

[207] Ibid., file M-M-4, E. Willis to J.M. Robb, August 13, 1939

> It required money to carry on, and apparently it is out of the question to get it. The organizations which are built up were beginning to function very well and it was a heart breaker, as it were, to destroy them all.[208]

However, some hope remained. For example, while Wally Miller, the provincial organizer in Manitoba, was dismissed, he still planned to keep in contact with party people as he travelled the province "in connection with regional meetings of the Manitoba School Trustees Association of which I am the president...."[209] Although planned nominating conventions had been cancelled, some candidates, such as Dinsdale, were already in the field.

> Keeping the probability of an election in mind, while for the present no active organization will be carried out, I do not see any reason why our candidates already in the field should not make an effort to keep in tough with their constituents by personal contact as far as local conditions permit.[210]

Therefore, as long as Dinsdale remained as the candidate, all of the political value of the preparatory work in Brandon would not be lost as a result of the outbreak of World War II. Unfortunately, for the Conservatives, that did not prove to be the case.

Brandon Liberals, of course, were in the advantageous position of "holding" the seat as they approached this upcoming federal election. However, Matthews, as noted previously, had opposed a 1939 autumn election as economic and climatic conditions could be injurious to the government's cause. The Liberals were also deeply concerned about the floor price for wheat and how that issue could affect the relationship between their provincial and federal parties. The floor price of eighty cents per bushel would have to be reduced in 1939--due to the declining world price--and the provincial Liberals were adamant that it should not be lower than seventy cents per bushel.

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[208] Ibid., J.M. Robb to E. Willis, September 15, 1939

[209] Ibid., file, M-M-6, W. Miller to J.M. Robb, September 18, 1939

[210] Ibid., file M-B-1a, J.M. Robb to G. Dinsdale, September 16, 1939

> If the guaranteed minimum price payable by the Wheat Board is set at 60 cents and a general federal election takes place this fall, we would find the provincial members, including members of the cabinet, on the sidelines or even in opposition.[211]

The alienation of the provincial Liberals could disrupt the entire federal Liberal organization as the provincial Liberal president warned.

> The provincial members constitute the backbone of our federal constituency organizations. In some of the constituencies, the organization is on provincial lines. Our two field men are both provincial members.[212]

While Brandon Liberals would be less affected by this separation, should it occur, as they currently held the seat federally--but not provincially, this debate did indicate the significance of the close interrelationship that existed between the provincial and federal Liberal parties in 1939.

While the Conservatives and the Liberals prepared themselves for the 1939 federal election that was not to be, the CCF, in Brandon, were a marked contrast. While the party had hired one Charles Biesick as a full time provincial organizer and although Harry Wood, the Justice area farmer who had stood as a candidate in both 1935 and 1938, was employed as a part-time organizer in the rural Brandon-Portage area, the CCF in Brandon itself were notably silent. As a result, Beatrice Brigden, the provincial secretary, decided to visit her former constituency.

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[211] PAC, M. King Papers, J1 ser., vol. 271, 229333, W.J. Lindal to King, April 14, 1939. Lindal was president of the Manitoba Liberal Association.

[212] Ibid.

> I am planning on going to Brandon City myself where the work has gone very stale: but knowing the old workers so well it is hoped I may again arouse them.[213]

The CCF, it would appear, were the least well prepared for the 1939 federal election. While they, therefore, had not made extensive organizational preparations which would be largely nullified by the "political truce" of September 1939, the CCF would still be hurt politically by the fact that the federal election, when it did occur, proved to be a wartime--rather than a peacetime--election. Thus, the outbreak of war in September 1939 weakened the political position of both the Conservatives and the CCF in Brandon. Could anyone say that the Mackenzie King Liberals were not a lucky political party?

There was little in municipal political developments in Brandon to indicate that the community was moving from one era into another in 1939. Admittedly, one correspondent--identified only as "Citizen"--argued that the example of the 1915 wartime election should be followed--i.e., that Mayor Young and his council should be re-elected by acclamation.[214] However, although there were no particularly noteworthy developments or issues in 1939, three mayoralty and ten aldermanic candidates filed for election. This was a "near record" expression of public interest. The fact that there were three I.L.P. candidates in that aldermanic race was an interesting indication of the survival of the I.L.P. as a separate political force some six years after the formation of the CCF. The results, however, conformed to the pattern previously established. While Alderman Spafford, one of the I.L.P. nominees, was a strong fourth with 2,555 votes, his two colleagues--H.R. Davis and W.P. Kearns--were well back in the field with 1,640 and 1,082 votes respectively.[215] Spafford's personal support obviously exceeded any "labour party vote" that may have existed in Brandon by a very large degree. The I.L.P. clearly had not benefitted substantially at the municipal political level as a result of the Depression. However, six of the ten aldermanic candidates in 1939 were railway employees--and six of the ten aldermen on council continued to be railway men. The pattern of railway--although not I.L.P.--predominance that had emerged in the late 1920s was still most evident.

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[213] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Beatrice Brigden to David Lewis, June 3, 1939

[214] Brandon Daily Sun, November 7, 1939

The 1939 mayoralty election also produced, as noted earlier, further evidence of Harry Cater's declining political position. This man, who could not be conquered during "his" decade of the 1920s, now placed a poor third in 1939 with 645 votes. Brandon's most decorated World War I hero, James Kirkcaldy, whose campaign advertisements featured him in his military medals, polled 1,373 votes. However, neither candidate--both of whom were of an earlier era--was a serious challenge to Mayor Fred Young who easily won re-election by sweeping all of the polls for a total of 3,145 votes. For Harry Cater, unprecedented success had been turned into dismal failure by the civic financial crisis and by his own refusal "to step aside."

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[215] Davis was eighth while Kearns was last. Ibid., November 29, 1939

Surely there was a certain tragic quality to this man's political demise.

The era of the Great Depression had ended. It had been ten long years, both for the individuals who had to cope with the personal crises of unemployment, relief, reduced wages and the immeasurable deprivation that was part of all that; and for the civic leaders who had tried--and failed--to cope with Brandon's financial crisis. It had been an era of change for provincial and federal politicians as Brandon Conservatives won major victories, first federally in 1930 and then provincially in 1932. They had held those gains in Brandon in 1935 (despite widespread losses elsewhere) and in 1936. The image of Brandon as a Conservative stronghold may have been inaccurate, however, as the party immediately lost the federal seat once Dave Beaubier was gone--and there were fears that they would suffer a similar fate provincially if George Dinsdale were to go. Thus, although there were many other political factors of consequence in each instance, such as the role of the pro-Conservative Brandon Sun and a desire, in 1938, to share in the "goodies" of politics, this Depression era must also be viewed as a decade in which personalities predominated--at least to some degree. As this was also true of municipal politics where individuals such as Harry Spafford clearly outdistanced his fellow I.L.P. candidates and where Harry Cater himself constituted, for much of the decade, a significant political force, one can conclude that politics in Brandon during the era of the Great Depression was, to a large degree, the politics of the individual. Perhaps that is always the case in smaller communities where candidates are sufficiently well known to be viewed as individuals in the mind of the electorate?

Chapter VIII

World War II, the CCF and the Return to Political "Normalcy."

The decade of World War II and the post-war readjustment period which followed was an era of renewed economic growth and intensive political activity. While the city's population in the 1930s had been characterized by slight shifts--in both directions,[1] Brandon experienced a period of steady, albeit minimal, growth in the war- post war era as it grew from 17,383 in 1941 to 17,551 in 1946 and to a subsequent 1951 total of 20,598.[2] The labour force grew even more significantly in the same period--from a total of 5,027 in 1941[3] to 5,604 in 1946.[4] In contrast with the previous decade, the 1940s was also a decade of relatively full employment. In fact, World War II marked the end of the Depression while the post-war readjustment period proved to be much less difficult than many had anticipated. For example, while 20.41% of Brandon's labour force were reportedly "not at work" on June 1, 1936;[5] only 2.23% of an expanded labour force were "without jobs" on June 2, 1941.[6] While the percentage "without jobs" had grown to 4.85% on May

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[1] According to census statistics, Brandon's population at the time of the 1936 report was 16,461 which constituted a slight decline from the 1931 total of 17,082. By the time of the 1941 report, the city's population had expanded again to 17,383. Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 1

[2] The 1951 census statistics note that a small part of the R.M. of Cornwallis had been annexed to the city in 1945. Census of Canada, 1951, vol. 1, 6-115

[3] Census of Canada, 1931, vol. 6

[4] Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 2

[5] Census of Prairie Provinces, 1936, vol. 2

[6] Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 6

31, 1946,[7] the post-war depression which some had feared--and predicted--had not materialized. Instead, Brandon retailers reported that 1947, for example, was their "greatest year ever."[8] While the outbreak of World War II in early September 1939 had led to a temporary political "truce" among the federal political parties, the war era and post-war era was marked by three federal elections: in 1940; in 1945; and in 1949. In addition, Brandon voters went to the polls on four other occasions: for provincial elections in 1941; in 1945; and again in 1949; and for the provincial by-election of November 18, 1943. While the number of elections was, in itself, extraordinary, the results of those contests in Brandon were note-worthy in that this relatively short period of time witnessed the meteoric rise and fall of the CCF party—a development which may have been closely related to the prevailing economic conditions. This sharp change in the CCF's political fortunes and the return to the pattern of "ministerialist" voting were to be the most notable features of politics in Brandon in this war—post war era.

Mackenzie King's unexpected decision to go to the people on March 26, 1940,caught Brandon Conservatives unprepared. While local Conservatives, in early 1939, had labouriously and successfully struggled with the complexities of internal party politics in order to secure George Dinsdale, Brandon Conservative M.L.A., as their federal candidate, any advantage that they might have secured was lost when Dinsdale decided to step aside at the last moment. Dinsdale, reportedly, had been in poor health throughout much of 1939 and his political future was uncertain in early 1940. Although he formally resigned the nomination in late

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[7] Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 2

[8] Brandon Daily Sun, December 31, 1947

January,[9] he momentarily reconsidered prior to the February 13 nominating convention.[10] However, in the end, a thirty-one year old lawyer-farmer, J.W. Thompson, who in 1929 had returned to practise law in the same Elkhorn-Virden area where he had been born and raised, won the "National Government" nomination on the first ballot over Mayor Fred Young and Justice area farmer, Wes Pentland.[11] Thompson, who had unsuccessfully sought the Conservative nomination in both 1938 and 1939, was a resident of the rural part of this federal constituency--a fact which could lessen his appeal with Brandon voters. However, the Conservative's provincial organizer was confident that the choice of the Elkhorn lawyer was quite acceptable: "The Brandon Boys are very enthusiastic and Brandon will be a sure winner."[12] This confidence, however, proved to be ill-founded.

The CCF also nominated a rural resident in 1940 in the person of Harry Wood, the Justice area farmer who was making his third bid for federal office. While CCF officials listed the Brandon constituency among the "hopefuls,"[13] the CCF in Brandon had been notably inactive in 1939[14] and one suspects that they, too, were ill-prepared for this snap election. In addition, the party was seemingly philosophically ill-suited for the responsibilities of wartime government. In the absence of any significant "local" factor--such as a particularly attractive candidate, the CCF had little chance of success in Brandon in this 1940 federal election.

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[9] Ibid., January 31, 1940

[10] The local constituency president reported on February 5, 1940, that Dinsdale intended to continue with his candidature. PC Association, file M-M-6, R.L. McQuarrie to J.M. Robb, February 5, 1940

[11] George Beaubier, whose name had also been proposed, was not considered by the convention as he had enlisted with the Cameron Highlanders and would be unavailable to campaign. Brandon Daily Sun, February 9, 1940

[12] PC Association, file M-M-6, W.C. Miller to J.M. Robb, February 14, 1940

[13] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, H.J. Peddie to David Lewis, January 31, 1939. While this document was dated 1939, other evidence suggests that the date should have read January 31, 1940.

[14] Beatrice Brigden's comments on the inactivity of the CCF in Brandon have already been noted.

The Liberals were in a very advantageous position as the March, 1940 federal election drew nearer. Their candidate, J.E. Matthews, currently held the seat: he was the only candidate who was a resident of Brandon--the community which comprised 40% of the constituency's voting population; and he, as a government member, should benefit from the inevitable Liberal claim that "this is no time to temporize with our united war effort. Let us go forward united."[15] Although the Conservatives were critical of the government's military record,[16] the Liberals were going to the polls prior to any severe test of Canada's unpreparedness. Thus, the timing of the election, as one might expect, worked to the advantage of all Liberal candidates--Matthews included.

The local campaign was, in the words of the Brandon Daily Sun, "not as exciting as some previous ones due to the fact that wartime conditions prevail...."[17] While there were fewer public meetings in this winter election, the Sun reported that all parts of the constituency were thoroughly canvassed and, in addition, the radio was used extensively.[18] Ironically this election campaign, which had already been "postponed" by the outbreak of hostilities in September 1939, was halted temporarily in its early stages due to the death of the Governor General Lord Tweedsmuir. As a result, the tempo of the campaign was noticeably "slowed," a factor which would probably be advantageous to the Liberal incumbent.

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[15] Brandon Daily Sun, March 19, 1940

[16] For example, H.H. Stevens, while speaking in Brandon, criticized the government for a critical shortage of uniforms and equipment. Ibid., March 8, 1940

[17] Ibid., March 25, 1940

Brandon Conservatives tried valiantly to campaign on the issues in 1940. Wheat prices had declined while implement costs had been allowed to increase; the government's administration of war contracts was unbusinesslike; the government had done nothing to solve the unemployment problem: there was, they claimed, an urgent need for a National Government for the duration of the War.[19] However, despite the assistance of H.H. Stevens, the former Reconstruction Party leader; and M.A. Macpherson of Regina; J.W.M. Thompson was no match for the Liberal incumbent. In fact, it was a rout.

While Matthews had won the 1938 by-election by 1,000 plus votes over fellow Brandonite, George Beaubier, the Liberal candidate now swept 104 of 133 polls with a total vote of 8,908 to Thompson's 6,168. J. Harry

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[18] The extensive use of radio may have altered the character of election campaigns by 1940. This, at least, was the opinion of veteran political observer, T.A. Crerar, who believed that the excessively partisan criticism by National Government supporters such as Mitch Hepburn, George Drew and Dr. Manion had hurt their cause:

> "There is a moral to all this--and that is that political mud-slinging does not pay. This sort of campaign does not appeal to the feminine voter; moreover, the radio by eliminating appeals to mob psychology, has greatly altered the methods of campaigning and, I think, are for the better."

PAC, A.K. Cameron Papers, vol. 35, Crerar to A.K. Cameron, April 3, 1940

[19] Brandon Daily Sun, March 22, 1940

Wood, the CCF candidate, polled only 2,609 votes in his poorest showing ever.[20] These decisive results suggest that the 1940 election in Brandon was essentially "no contest." The national outcome was never in doubt and Brandon area voters were clearly in step with the nation. Without a particularly strong local Conservative candidate such as George Dinsdale might well have been, there were insufficient local factors (e.g., the influence of the pro-Conservative Brandon Daily Sun) to offset the national trend. That Brandon was in the mainstream of Canada politics was also evident when the results of the special military poll were released. While National Government candidates nationally received 50% of military votes to the Liberals 43%,[21] Thompson polled eighty-three votes to Matthews's seventy-two. The results in Brandon in 1940 were clearly typical of the nation as a whole. As goes Brandon, so goes the nation? Or, to be more realistic, as goes Canada, so goes Brandon?

If the tempo of the federal election campaign had been somewhat restrained as a result of the War, municipal politics in 1940 virtually "ground to a halt." Despite the fact that several basic questions such as increased civic salaries, the possible implementation of a civic pension fund and the need to recommence interest payments on the city's debt[22] remained unresolved, all of the incumbent aldermen were re-elected by acclamation late that autumn. As a result, election costs of some

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[20] Ibid., March 27, 1940

[21] The total military vote in Brandon was 165. The CCF candidate received ten of those votes. Ibid., April 2, 1940

[22] The outstanding interest payments totalled $316,000.00 by the end of 1940 while the principal was $1,572,422.12. Ibid., February 19, 1941

$700 had been avoided, an economy which the Sun welcomed.[23] It was the first aldermanic election by acclamation since 1932.

The 1941 provincial election was, to a large degree, a "non-election" as a phenomenal total of twenty-six M.L.A.'s were elected by acclamation while only twenty "anti-coalitionists" were even nominated. Therefore, the re-election of the coalition government--which had been formed in 1940 in response to the War and as a result of the need to press unitedly for the recommendations of the Rowell-Sirois Commission--was never in doubt. While the CCF in Brandon, who were a party to that coalition, did not seriously consider the possibility of contesting the Brandon constituency, the Independent Labor Party--as distinct from the CCF--did discuss the question at one or two meetings. However, they decided to support George Dinsdale and the coalition for the duration of the War.[24] Dinsdale, however, was still to have the dubious distinction of being one of only four incumbent "coalitionists" who was opposed by another pro-coalitionist in that rather unique provincial election.

Actually both the Conservatives and the Liberals maintained that an election would not have been necessary in the Brandon constituency in 1941--if only the other party had co-operated fully. George Dinsdale claimed that he, as the incumbent, was entitled to the coalitionist nomination[25] and he also believed that he was the appropriate choice as he "didn't give a hoot for politics and he did not think there should be any at this time."[26] The Liberal-Progressives, on the other hand, were quite prepared to support any single coalitionist candidate who was chosen by a joint nominating convention.[27] As Dinsdale--the incumbent--was not prepared to incur that "risk," the Liberal-Progressives proceeded to nominate "their own" Dr. H.O. McDiarmid--who had been their candidate in 1936--as a coalitionist supporter. Party politics obviously remained very much in existence in Brandon, despite the formation of the coalition government in 1940.[28]

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[23] Ibid., November 12, 1940

[24] Ibid., March 31, 1941

[25] The Conservatives, for instance, noted later in their advertisements that they had not opposed any sitting coalitionist supporters. Ibid., April 21, 1941

[26] Ibid., March 27, 1941

As both candidates were committed to providing basic support for Bracken's coalition ministry, the election in Brandon became essentially a personal struggle based upon the two candidate's record of service to the Brandon community--and their list of accomplishments![29] Thus, Dinsdale's advertisements noted that the Conservative M.L.A. had served Brandon "not for 5 years, but for 35 years as alderman, Mayor, Member of the Legislature--and as a private citizen."[30] On the other hand, Liberal-Progressive advertisements maintained that McDiarmid had accomplished more for Brandon in five years as a defeated candidate

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27. The Liberal-Progressives denied that Dinsdale should have the right, in effect, to nominate himself. Ibid., April 5, 1941. It was also rumoured, at one point, that Mayor Fred Young, a Conservative, might also seek the coalitionist nomination. Ibid., March 22, 1941. Perhaps the dissatisfaction with George Dinsdale was not confined to the Liberal-Progressive camp.

28. While party differences were quite evident in Brandon, this was not true of the province as a whole. The provincial Conservative organization had largely ceased to function as a result of the decision to enter into the coalition. For example, the provincial Conservative executive had not even met in a year and provincial delegates to a national Conservative meeting were, as a result, "hand-picked" by Errick Willis, the provincial leader.

29. It is interesting to note that J.E. Matthews, the Liberal M.P. for Brandon, returned to campaign on McDiarmid's behalf despite the existence of the provincial coalition government. Dinsdale's outside supporters were limited to members of the Manitoba Legislature.

30. Brandon Daily Sun, April 17, 1941

candidate than Dinsdale had in nine years as the city's M.L.A.! While this process of claim and counter-claim could continue inconclusively, the Liberal-Progressives may have been more effective with their subtle reference to Dinsdale's lack of "promotion": "There is something wrong when a member after sitting for nine years had been passed up in the Coalition Cabinet."[31] This could, in fact, be a telling criticism if the desire of Brandon voters to be represented in the "ministry" was as strong as it had, on occasions, appeared to be.

As there was no CCF candidate in this election, much of the candidates' attention--and especially Dinsdale's--was directed towards the 1,300 votes that Spafford had polled in 1936. Although Dinsdale had defeated McDiarmid by over 700 votes in 1936, those CCF votes could presumably be crucial to the outcome in 1941. As a result, Dinsdale organized a number of public meetings in the city's north end for which he recruited John Leronwich, a north end resident and a one time municipal candidate, to speak on his behalf. While Dinsdale's advertisements also stressed the co-operation which he had provided "Labor and CCF members" in "all measures for the benefit of the laboring men of Manitoba...,"[32] his efforts may have been somewhat in vain. Certainly a close affinity between the CCF and the Liberals in Brandon's north end had been apparent in previous elections in the 1930s and McDiarmid did seem to benefit most in 1941 from the absence of a CCF candidate.[33]

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[31] Ibid., April 16, 1941

[32] Ibid., April 17, 1941

[33] Ibid., April 23, 1941. McDiarmid's total in 1941 was almost 900 votes greater than the "first ballot" results in 1936 while Dinsdale's total had increased by only 600 votes.

Despite unfavourable weather conditions and the prevailing electoral disinterest--which some believed to be a natural by-product of the nation's involvement in World War II,[34] 65% of the eligible electorate voted in 1941. Thus, while this election was a "non-event" for much of Manitoba, the circumstances in Brandon were markedly different as the incumbent Dinsdale's majority was significantly reduced in his 3,285 to 2,921 victory over Dr. H.O. McDiarmid. While the voters had, of course, elected a coalitionist, they had seemingly "passed up" a possible opportunity to be represented in the cabinet. Perhaps that appeal was never as strong as some had assumed or perhaps that factor was less significant in 1941 when both nominees were actually "ministerialist" candidates? In any event, George Dinsdale's previous political success and his apparent personal appeal--as demonstrated by the Conservatives' earlier fears of the outcome should he not be the candidate--presumably compensated for any political disadvantage that might have been incurred by his previous omission from the cabinet.

While the provincial election predominated over all other political concerns in 1941, the city's municipal leaders were faced with many continuing, albeit often undramatic, problems. Fortunately, the War had proved to be economically beneficial as the numbers on relief had been sharply reduced.[35] However, the problem of the city's debt remained unresolved. As a result, city leaders devoted much of 1941 to negotiating with Brandon's creditors in an attempt to reach an agreement regarding the unpaid interest charges.[36] As the Municipal and Public Utility Board required that the agreement with the bond-holders precede other decisions, continuing problems such as the city's desire to restore civic salaries to their 1938 levels were left in abeyance.[37] Most of these civic problems--such as the shortage of housing[38]--were not, however, particularly divisive or political. In fact, in the opinion of the Brandon Daily Sun, none of the major civic problems could be resolved by the municipal elections which were scheduled for that December and the re-election of mayor and aldermen by acclamation was warranted. While Mayor Fred Young was subsequently re-elected to a third term by acclamation, seven candidates filed for the five aldermanic posts. It was an election, however, that generated very little public interest. Stanley Knowles had earlier attributed the prevailing electoral apathy to World War II: the 19% municipal vote in Brandon on December 2, 1941, and the defeat of certain specific candidates may have been due to the same cause.[39] Wars fought in the defence of democracy may, in the process, be damaging to that very democratic process.

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[34] Voting occurred on a "cold drizzling day." In addition, as Stanley Knowles noted, the War itself could be a major cause of electoral apathy: "The make-up of a provinvial [sic] legislature is unimportant in many people's minds, it is the war alone that matters." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, April 26, 1941

[35] There were no able bodied men on relief in mid 1941 (Brandon Daily Sun, July 15, 1941) and costs were sharply reduced as a result. For example, relief costs in July 1934 had totalled $13,214.73; in July 1942, they were reduced to $1,567.12. Ibid., August 18, 1942

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[36] The city, for example, offered (unsuccessfully) to pay 75% of the unpaid interest charges. Ibid., May 17, 1941. Wawanesa Mutual were the only bondholders who were prepared to accept that proposal in 1941. However, a general agreement was concluded in 1942, a condition of which was the appointment of the financial supervisor for another five years. Ibid., July 23, 1942

[37] The city had reduced civic salaries in 1938 as part of its response to the civic financial crisis. Ibid., October 15, 1941

[38] Brandon hoped to secure federal assistance for housing but the regulations required that such assistance be employed only to assist workers employed in the war related industries. Brandon did not have such industries. Ibid., June 3, 1941

While that same electoral apathy seemingly prevailed throughout 1942 at the municipal level as the five aldermanic candidates would be again elected by acclamation,[40] the amount of public interest generated by Mackenzie King's conscription referendum of April 27, 1942,was in marked contrast. Those who wished to free the Liberal government of its earlier promise not to introduce conscription were well organized in Brandon. Approximately twenty civic organizations were represented in the planning of the campaign and in the mass meetings which followed.[41] While observers stressed the non-political nature of this campaign, the 74% voter response in the Brandon constituency was evidence of the public interest in this war related issue. Although the outcome in Brandon constituency--and in the city itself--could never have been in doubt, the results were interesting. While the federal constituency voted 14,896

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[39] Political parties and citizen groups displayed virtually no public interest in the outcome as Alderman Spafford was the single "party" representative. The Sun, for one, was most disappointed by the results and particularly with the defeat of veteran Alderman Colonel J.F. Clark.

> "He was the victim of the eight thousand electors who did not trouble to vote. The less esteemed candidates had system and parties behind them who undemocratically plumped for special interests rather than for the general welfare of the entire city...."

Ibid., December 5, 1941

[40] There was no mayoralty election in 1942 as Mayor Young was beginning the second year of his term. There were, however, contested elections for school board that year and two well known "labourites," William Bain and Peter McDuffe, led the polls although only 10% of the electorate had responded. Ibid., December 2, 1942

[41] Ibid., April 14, 1942

(or 91.55%) in favour of and 1,375 against the referendum, 7,013 Brandon voters (or 89.59%) approved while 815 city voters voted "no." Thus, 59.27% of the opposition vote originated within the city although Brandon voters cast only 48.11% of the total vote. Of the 815 Brandon voters who voted "no," 212 (or 26.1%) were residents of 3 north end polls. Yet, 495 electors (or 70.91% of those voting) in those same polls supported the referendum.[42] Therefore, an overwhelming majority of Brandon voters, including those who lived in the so-called ethnic section of the city, approved the pro-conscription referendum on April 27, 1942. Brandon voters could, and did, respond--even in wartime--to those issues that were of obvious importance.

While the "conscription" referendum had not produced a partisan response within the Brandon community, there were some signs of increased "party" activity in 1942 which could be politically significant in the future. The federal party structure had remained intact--although rather inactive--and the calling of the national Conservative leadership convention in Winnipeg in December 1942 led to some re-organizational activity by the Conservatives at the constituency level. The results are interesting in that they indicate the predominance of Brandon over the surrounding political hinterland--i.e., that rural area which together with the city constituted the federal riding of Brandon. As the secretary to the local federal Conservative association explained:

> The Federal Executive officers are usually selected from the four Provincial constituencies which compose the Federal Constituency namely Brandon, Glenwood, Lansdowne and Virden.
>
> As a rule the President of the Federal Constituency is the holder of the Brandon Presidency and the

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42. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1942

> Secretary (the Brandon Secretary) together with one each of the Provincial Constituencies.[43]

This primacy of Brandon Conservatives in the affairs of the local federal association was also evident in the choice of delegates to that 1942 federal leadership convention. Three of the four voting delegates and one of three alternates elected to represent that local federal association were Brandon residents.[44] Was Brandon really the political "sub-metropolis" of western Manitoba?

The provincial by-election of November 1943, which was necessitated by the death of George Dinsdale, Brandon's (Conservative) M.L.A. since 1932, was to be one of the most interesting contests in the political history of Brandon as it marked the sudden rise of the CCF in that community. The War, as events proved, had passed its mid-point[45] and people had begun to look to the post-war era and the hopes which that prospect generated. For example, the "dreams" of city aldermen--whether they be of a civic auditorium, a public library, roads, sidewalks or sewers[46]--probably contributed to the climate in which the November 1943 by-election was conducted. However, there was also a wide-spread fear in 1943 that the War would be followed by a return to the Depression unless significant governmental policy changes occured.[47] Despite the coalitionists' reiteration of Winston Churchill's "dictum"--"this is not the time for those who have practical war work to do to dream of a brave new world"[48]--the climate in 1943 was ideally suited for the partial renewal of partisan warfare and particularly for the now anti-coalitionist CCF.[49]

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[43] PC Association, file M-B-1, Morgan W.R. John to J.E. Denison, March 9, 1942. This pattern was still evident in 1949 when Cam Donaldson and his provincial Brandon PC executive became, in addition, the Brandon federal PC executive. *Brandon Daily Sun*, March 23, 1949

[44] *Ibid*., November 3, 1942

[45] However, the major invasion of Europe was yet to come; a fuel shortage was feared for the winter of 1943-44; and citizens were heavily engaged that year in the city's fourth Victory Loan Campaign. That campaign was chaired by Ed Fotheringham, the man who had dethroned Harry Cater in 1931. One wonders whether some of the electoral apathy evident in 1941-42 was due to the fact that civic leaders were directing their energies into non-political activities such as Victory Loan Campaigns.

[46] *Brandon Daily Sun*, April 7, 1943

In retrospect, 1943 seemed to belong to the CCF. Nationally, the Gallup polls rated them ahead of both the Liberals and Conservatives in September 1943.[50] Provincially, they had withdrawn from the coalition ministry on the grounds that Premier Bracken's resignation to accept the national leadership of the Progressive Conservative party had terminated the 1940 agreement[51] and, as a result, they had become automatically His Majesty's Loyal Opposition--with a presumably enhanced stature. Certainly, their unprecedented success in three of the four provincial by-elections held to date in 1943 was extremely encouraging. In addition, the party seemed to be essentially united after an apparent showdown with the sometimes troublesome I.L.P.[52] The province-wide membership totals had increased dramatically from 1,026 in October 1942 to 2,762 in late August 1943;[53] and even the "dormant" Brandon group was growing slowly --from 59 in August to a 100 plus by mid October 1943.[54] While both Lloyd Stinson and Stanley Knowles admitted that the November 1943 by-election would be an extremely difficult contest,[55] they believed that they had a chance: they also recognized the significance of this by-election to their party's future.[56]

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[47] The CCF naturally attempted to capitalize upon this fear. Thus, an election eve advertisement stated: "This means soup kitchens, bread lines and riding the rods for our returned men and youth. All the old parties will have for them will be the police clubs, and tear gas they used at Vancouver and Regina." Ibid., November 17, 1943

[48] Fred Young, the coalitionist candidate, used this Churchillian quotation in the by-election campaign--to no avail. Ibid., November 10, 1943

[49] While Morton has stated that the CCF did not withdraw from the coalition until 1945 (Morton, Manitoba; a History, 450), Jackson's more recent provincial history concurs with the contemporary sources which indicate that the CCF withdrew in 1943. James A. Jackson, The Centennial History of Manitoba (Toronto 1970), 239. Certainly, the advertisements and the newspaper reports of the 1943 by-election differentiated clearly between the "Government candidate" (i.e., Young) and the CCF nominee.

[50] Beck, Pendulum of Power, 243

[51] Brandon Daily Sun, October 23, 1943

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[52] "The I.L.P. still stinks of course but we've got them beaten.... The main thing is that we control the I.L.P. and whip is going to crash very gently from now until we're ready for the show down."

PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Alistair Stewart to David Lewis, March 17, 1942. The conflict between the CCF and the I.L.P., however, had never been particularly damaging in Brandon itself.

[53] Ibid., vol. 62, Minutes of CCF [Manitoba] Executive meeting, September 2, 1943

[54] Ibid., vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, October 15, 1943

[55] As Stanley Knowles, the CCF provincial organizer, realized, Premier Stuart Garson, who had succeeded Bracken in early 1943, had done his "homework" thoroughly.

> "As a matter of fact, Garson acted unusually fast. Dinsdale late Brandon MLA, died in Sept. [sic]. But Garson went right into both B. [Brandon] and P. la P. [Portage La Prairie] and mended all fences in advance, persuading the local liberals in each case to back a tory as a coalition candidate. (In each case the deal MLA was a Tory).... So far as our own organization goes, our chances are poor in both seats. But if we can tie the CCF tide to our candidates and get an organization functioning, we might make the grade."

Ibid., vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, October 18, 1943

[56] Lloyd Stinson, who also admitted that these two by-elections "are not going to be easy...," argued, however, that "if we can win them then we can form governments all over the lot." Ibid., vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, October 15, 1943

The CCF's choice in Brandon in 1943 was a popular local doctor and school board member, Dwight Lyman Johnson. The forty-five year old Johnson was a rather extraordinary candidate. Born in Rapid City (within twenty-four miles of Brandon) in 1898, young Johnson had subsequently served overseas in the World War. He had returned to graduate from Brandon College and then from the University of Manitoba's College of Medicine. After graduation, Dr. Johnson served as a medical missionary in the Philippines from 1926 to 1931--during which time he may have developed a sympathy for the Communism which he later espoused.[57] Upon returning to Brandon, he won election to the school board, serving in that capacity from 1937 to 1943.[58] He was also personally popular. In short, he was the type of "strong" candidate whose personal appeal should extend well beyond traditional "party" lines.

Just as the success of A.E. Smith in 1920 had led to a coalescence of the Liberal and Conservative forces, the upsurgence of the CCF in 1943 in Brandon re-united those forces that had fought in opposition to each other as recently as the 1941 provincial election. While it is true that "the external enemy unifies...," one suspects that Premier Garson's "persuasive" role was a significant factor. Certainly the decision to hold a joint nominating convention was reached seemingly without difficulty

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57. There is disagreement among local residents as to the nature of Dr. Johnson's political philosophy as of 1943. While Cater had "hinted" rather strongly in 1937 that Johnson and others were "Red" (Brandon Daily Sun, November 26, 1937), residents who voted for Johnson "the man" in 1943 insist that they were unaware of such political convictions. It is also important to note that Stanley H. Knowles, the recently elected Winnipeg North-Centre M.P. who helped organize the CCF campaign, insists quite emphatically that Johnson was not (to his knowledge) a Communist at the time of the 1943 by-election. Interview with Stanley H. Knowles M.P., May 29, 1976

58. Parliamentary Guide, 1945

and the fact that Brandon's (Conservative) Mayor, Fred Young, whose primary qualification was his municipal record which began in 1921, was the only nominee[59] supports Stanley Knowles's contention that all the details had been settled in advance. There was apparently none of the inter-party conflict in 1943 that had characterized the deliberations of 1941--when the CCF had not fielded a candidate.

The campaign was strenuously (and bitterly) fought on radio, in the home delivery of pamphlets and circulars,[60] in newspapers and on the public platform where political notables such as Premier Garson, T.C. Douglas M.P., Stanley Knowles M.P., and Berry Richards, the newly elected CCF M.L.A. for The Pas, appeared. Certainly, as the Gallup Poll results indicated, the CCF were at or near their peak in 1943 and, according to Knowles, they made strong gains early in the campaign.[61] Over 400, Knowles claimed, had attended a CCF meeting in the first week of the campaign--while Premier Garson had drawn only 50--and the CCF organizer, as a result, was more optimistic than he had been prior to the campaign: "I would say that our chances are good, and possibly I am too conservative in saying only that."[62] The CCF campaign stressed the need for new governmental policies in the future; the need to provide jobs for the one and one-half million men and women who were in the military and the wartime industries;[63] and the horrors of the Depression which would return with the end of the War--unless there was a radical change in governmental policies.

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[59] Young was nominated by Dr. H.O. McDiarmid, the Liberal candidate in both 1936 and 1941, and the nomination was seconded by J.C. Donaldson, a future Conservative M.L.A. Brandon Daily Sun, October 15, 1943

[60] According to the Winnipeg Tribune, the CCF were the only party to employ what was described as a "mail order appeal.... Every Brandon home where a registered voter dwells has received pamphlets and circulars." Winnipeg Tribune, November 16, 1943

[61] "A few weeks ago Brandon looked to be ours with a bang but...." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, November 20, 1943

[62] Ibid., Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, October 19, 1943

The coalitionists stressed their own record in the provision of social services, their own plans for post-war readjustment, the advantage of voting "ministerialist,"[64] while--simultaneously--they launched a most intensive "scare" campaign.[65] Whether the tenor of this coalitionist campaign or the arguments of the Brandon Daily Sun which editorially stated that Canada would have been governed by "Hitler or Hirohito or both"[66] had the CCF been in power federally in 1939 were too extreme to be believable was, perhaps, the main question raised by this intense campaign in 1943.[67] However, a well-publicized "pro-Socialist" speech by Harold Winch[68] during the course of the by-election campaign did prove, in Stanley Knowles's opinion, to be one of the most significant incidents in that election.

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[63] Brandon Daily Sun, October 20, 1943

[64] "As the second city of Manitoba, it is in our interests to have a Government member represent Brandon...." Ibid., November 9, 1943

[65] For example, Brandon citizens were warned that the "CCF is anti-British Revolutionary Nationalist Socialist Party" (ibid., November 15, 1943); that personal bank deposits would be confiscated (ibid.); that "the issue" was simply that of "Democracy vs. National Socialism" (ibid., November 12, 1943); that taxes would rise astronomically as they had done in New Zealand--a "Labour showcase" (ibid., November 9, 1943); and that the amalgamation of the two railway companies would mean lost seniority and lost jobs. Ibid., November 15, 1943

[66] Ibid., November 17, 1943

[67] The attempt by the coalitionist supporters to arouse the fears of railway employees apparently was unsuccessful as the advance poll--which was usually a railway vote--went thirty-nine to twelve for Dr. Johnson. Ibid., November 19, 1943

[68] Winch was the CCF's provincial leader in British Columbia.

> A few weeks ago Brandon looked to be ours with a bang, but the capital made out of H.W. [Harold Winch's speech] was terrific, and as one (along with Tommy) who clarified and explained Harold's position, and ours, to the satisfaction of our audience, perhaps I can be frank enough to say that the tempest over H.W. almost cost us the Brandon seat.[69]

Probably incidents such as Harold Winch's speech in Calgary did help make the coalitionist "scare" campaign seem more credible.

One of the characteristics of politics in Brandon since the era of the Great War had been the presence of a fairly sizable "labour" core of support which usually approximated 2,000 votes. While a Tribune reporter contended that "some of it nearly always used to go to the former member, George Dinsdale,"[70] Dr. Johnson reportedly had that vote solid in 1943 and, in addition, the popular doctor had allegedly won the support of much of the rather substantial retired farmer vote, many of whom were "tired of the old parties."[71] Memories of the Depression combined with the CCF's constantly reiterated demands "for a change" could be politically significant with that segment of the electorate. The Tribune had also noted that there were approximately

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[69] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, November 20, 1943

[70] Winnipeg Tribune, November 16, 1943. This, however, is rather debatable. Certainly Dinsdale campaigned strenuously for this vote, but usually without significant success.

[71] Ibid. The significance of that "retired" vote is difficult to determine. However, according to the 1941 census returns 2,359 residents or 18.86% of Brandon's "twenty years and plus" population was sixty years of age or older. Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 2. The comparable figure in the 1946 census return was 22.59%. Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 1

900 non-Anglo-Saxon names on the electoral list[72] and the ethnic vote had been traditionally "labour" for several elections. Although that vote cannot decisively be "isolated," the city's three north-end polls did vote CCF by a total of 573 to 168. However, neither that vote nor the "east end" railway polls in themselves were sufficient to account fully for Johnson's majority over Mayor Young by a vote of 3,722 to 3,204.[73] While Errick Willis contended that Johnson's support was centred "in the industrial districts,"[74] surely Johnson's victory over Young was partly a personal triumph.[75] As a result, the coalitionist's "scare" campaign was probably ignored by many of the electorate. Local factors were an important if not determinant part

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[72] Actually, this estimate of 900 seems rather small as the 1941 census returns indicated that there were 1,526 Ukrainians, 135 Russians, 1,311 Poles and 20 Hungarians--according to racial origin--listed as residents of Brandon. Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 2, 510

[73] The east end poll located at 346 Russell Street went to Johnson 268 to 129. Brandon Daily Sun, November 19, 1943. The turn-out on that "almost spring like" November 18, 1943, was exceptionally large as 72% of the voters went to the polls--a higher percentage than had voted in the 1936 provincial election. Presumably, the interest aroused by the intensity of the campaign combined with the coalitionist's desire "to vote everyone" (PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98. Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, November 20, 1943) had produced the largest popular vote ever cast in this constituency. It should be noted, however, that Brandon's population had been increasing during World War II despite the numbers of men who had enlisted for military service and for industrial "war work" elsewhere in Canada. Thus, Brandon's population 1943 was 18,470, an increase of 582 during the previous two years. Brandon Daily Sun, July 17, 1943

[74] Winnipeg Tribune, November 20, 1943

[75] Stanley Knowles recalls Dwight Johnson as being an "able orator..., well-known as a medical doctor," and probably an unusually personally attractive political candidate. Interview with Stanley Knowles, May 29, 1976

of politics in Brandon.[76]

1943 was one of those few years in which there was an obviously strong correlation between provincial and municipal politics. The fact that the provincial by-election and the annual municipal elections were held within days of each other and that the CCF were obviously riding on a "political high" presumably led that party to make a determined effort at both levels in November 1943. Whether the "tide" that had elected Dr. Johnson with 3,700 plus votes could also sweep the five CCF aldermanic (and the four school board) candidates into office would, of course, be the crucial question.

However, this unprecedented resurgence of "party" interest in municipal politics by the CCF undoubtedly led to the formation of the allegedly "non-partisan" Brandon Citizens' Committee,[77] which was organized to endorse and support its own ticket of seven aldermanic candidates (including two for the two one-year terms) and mayoralty candidate L.H. McDorman.[78]

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[76] It must also be noted that the local CCF organization in Brandon was much more effective than that in Portage La Prairie where the CCF lost the by-election on that same date. Thus, the Provincial Secretary of the CCF wrote of the "live-wire committee" that was "on the job" in Brandon (PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, November 13, 1943) while Knowles noted the need to import outside help for Portage La Prairie. Ibid., vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, November 20, 1943. There may have been additional factors which contributed to Young's defeat. At least, the president of the Brandon PC Association later contended that the results in 1943 did not accurately represent local opinion: "I do not think we could rightly view the results of the recent Provincial election as a criterion for the coming Federal campaign, as there is no doubt in my mind that the poorly organized Conservative Association here, doubtlessly let the candidate down and that coupled with the deliberate betrayal by the Liberal party, resulted in the election of the CCF." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C.H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945

[77] The Brandon Citizens' Committee, in one of its paid advertisements, explained that its membership consisted of "every citizen of Brandon who is interested in the progress and prosperity of Brandon" and that it was "Absolutely Non-Partisan." Brandon Daily Sun, November 24, 1943

McDorman, a Brandon resident for forty-four years, a prominent businessman and a well known Liberal,[79] eventually won the mayoralty election by the extremely close vote of 2,194 to 2,169 over Frank Williamson, a local pump manufacturer and a prominent Conservative. In addition, four of the two year aldermanic terms were won by Brandon Citizens' Committee endorsed candidates as was one of the one year terms.[80] The CCF, meanwhile, were less successful as only veteran Alderman Harry Spafford and one W.M. Smith were elected.[81] Thus, the CCF strength that was evident in the November 18 by-election could not be polled in the municipal elections just two weeks later.[82] Presumably, some (or much)

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78. The fact that there were several "vacancies" on council undoubtedly made this contest unusually inviting for both groups. Mayor Fred Young had announced during the by-election campaign that he would not seek re-election as mayor. Fourteen-year aldermanic veteran A.B. Patterson, one of the several C.P.R. employees on council, retired in 1943. Two aldermen--F.T. Williamson and L.H. McDorman--created aldermanic "vacancies" by deciding to seek the mayor's chair while one other alderman left Brandon to move to British Columbia.

79. It is interesting to note that Leslie H. McDorman would subsequently be elected Liberal-Progressive M.L.A. for Brandon in 1945.

80. The four "two-year" victors were Dr. Schultz, a local physician who led the polls; W.H. Boreskie, a locomotive engineer who had proclaimed his independence of the CCF; N.A. McDowell, a tinsmith; and John Popkin, a local businessman. A.D. Burneskie, a local businessman, began what proved to be a most extensive civic career in 1943 with his "one-year" term. Brandon Daily Sun, December 1, 1943

81. Spafford placed fifth among those who were seeking two-year terms while Smith was elected to an one-year term.

82. Ironically, this major CCF effort came at a time when Brandon's economic picture had been greatly improved. According to the relief statistics, only 2.23% of the employable work force was unemployed (Census of Canada, 1941, vol. 6) while the city itself had reached an agreement with its creditors in 1942 to refund the matured debt. Brandon Daily Sun, August 1, 1942. By the end of 1942, the city's total liabilities had been reduced to $898,888.08 from the 1936 peak of $2,560,286.44. In addition, it was estimated that this civic debt would be reduced by another $115,000 by the end of 1943. Ibid., December 31, 1943

of Dr. Johnson's success in that by-election was due to his own personal appeal and that would not be transferable to other candidates at another political level.[83] Secondly, the relatively low voter turnout of 39%[84] suggests that the CCF were unable to realize their full potential in a municipal election which was presumably regarded by many voters to be of less "significance." Instead, one suspects that Johnson's (unexpected?) by-election victory generated the political fears which resulted in the formation of the Brandon Citizens' Committee and its subsequent success. Thus, success for the CCF at one level could well be politically damaging at another.

Ironically, the election of Dr. Dwight Johnson on November 18, 1943, proved to be extremely troublesome for the provincial CCF in yet another, and more serious, vein. Dr. Johnson and Berry Richards, both of whom had won by-election vitories for the CCF in 1943, were insistent that the CCF in Manitoba should join forces with the Labour Progressive Party. A proposal for affiliation, however, had previously been rejected by the CCF[85] and a fierce, internal struggle ensued. By early 1944, "behind the scenes" attempts to reconcile these differences had reportedly failed.

> The other matter, David, concerns my unfinished assignment with Dr. Johnson. Well, I'm afraid its finished now,....In his [Johnson's] opinion, the all important question that faces the CCF today is unity with the L.L.P.'s.... He regards

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[83] In fact, as Spafford polled only 2,304 votes while Smith won with 2,078 votes, the CCF vote did not seemingly benefit from that by-election victory. Other CCF candidates polled from 1,586 to 1,240 votes.

[84] Brandon Daily Sun, December 2, 1943

[85] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of CCF (Manitoba) Executive meeting, September 2, 1943

> the CCF as little more than a liberal party. He expresses an almost complete lack of confidence in both the national and provincial leadership, and regards the movement as autocratic rather than democratic. These are clearly his convictions and they are shared quite as strongly by his wife.... As to the prospects of his becoming a CCF'er, I scarcely see any hope. It would seem that the provincial office should take all possible steps to maintain other channels of communication with the CCF organization in Brandon than through Johnson. That he would have very many Brandon people sharing his sympathies, either in or out of the movement, I doubt very much.[86]

As neither side was prepared to back away, the result was near impasse. For example, the provincial CCF refused to ratify the constitution for the Brandon unit as it contained a clause which would permit consultation and co-operation with "other progressive groups"--i.e., the Labour Progressive Party.[87]

In the meantime, the CCF had to prepare for the upcoming federal election. As Lloyd Stinson, the provincial secretary, reported:

> We nominate in Brandon on Wednesday, the day M.J. and Sandy are there. We have had another bad time there lately with Dr. Johnson and his crowd, but the nominations may clear up the situation. There is a good candidate in sight if he can get in.[88]

Subsequently, a federal association with representatives from each of the four provincial ridings[89] was created; the troublesome Dr. Dwight Johnson M.L.A. was elected president; and a well-known fifty-two year old Brandon druggist, Alex M. Brown, was nominated as candidate.[90] An accord of sorts--albeit briefly--had been secured.

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[86] Ibid., vol. 98, Lloyd (Stinson?) to David Lewis, April 2, 1944

[87] Brandon Daily Sun, October 26, 1944

[88] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 61, Lloyd Stinson to David Lewis, November 4, 1944

[89] The four provincial ridings of Brandon, Lansdowne, Virden and Glenwood constituted the Brandon federal riding. Brandon Daily Sun, November 9, 1944. Note that the Brandon Sun carried the report of this nominating meeting on page eleven while other parties would normally have such meetings reported on page one.

However, Alex Brown was still not to enjoy the unqualified support of the "political left" in the Brandon community. First of all, A.E. Smith, Brandon's M.L.A. from 1920-22 and the man who had subsequently become a nationally known Communist, had returned to the city to accept the nomination of the Labor Progressive Party, on the very eve of the CCF nomination.[91] Within days, the former Methodist minister was holding public meetings in the city and broadcasting "radio talks" over local station CKX.[92] Secondly, internal differences within the Manitoba CCF erupted again as the party moved nearer to the inevitable federal election.[93] As Stanley Knowles reported to David Lewis, a meeting of the Manitoba executive and, subsequently, of the federal candidates for Manitoba had been badly marred by these seemingly irreconciliable differences.

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90. The seventy-one voting delegates elected Brown over Peter McDuffe, a civic employee, after L.V. Robson of Deleau had declined to stand. Ibid. Harry Wood, who had "run" previously in 1940, was now employed as a full-time organizer at a salary of $1,500 per year. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of CCF (Manitoba) Executive meeting, September 8, 1944

91. Smith was nominated on November 7, 1944 at a meeting held "in a city residence." Gavin Broadhurst was to be Smith's official agent. Brandon Daily Sun, November 8, 1944

92. Ibid., November 14, 1944. The Labor Progressive Party candidate obviously had some financial support.

93. The division within Brandon between the CCF and the Labor Progressive Party may partly explain why there was no apparent interest on the part of the CCF in the 1944 municipal election. In addition, the lack of any pronounced success in the 1943 municipal campaign may have been a contributing factor. In any event, there were no party candidates in that contest: in fact, there was virtually no advertising or indication of campaign activity at all. As the only issue of consequence was the proposal for a public library, there was a relatively small turn-out and the 1944 municipal election, as a whole, was rather inconsequential. Ibid., November 29, 1944

> Briefly, they [Johnson and Richards] demanded in writing that the Executive call a special provincial convention to give the membership a chance to settle matters thus far settled by provincial and national executives... for a general discussion on many points, 2 for example: international affairs, especially Canada's relations with the USSR, and election tactics, as pointed up by our entry into Grey North.... They denied any LPP connection or affinity, but said categorically they thought the CCF was wrong in plumping for socialism now, and that the LPP line was realistic, right, etc. They claimed deep thought, sincerity, honesty, a conscience, etc., all of which we lack, as we try to run the party from the top.... Each time a vote came near they would arise and say, "if you turn us down we will have no option, in all conscience, but to disassociate ourselves from the CCF." We told them OK every time, but they kept on with their bluff. Finally, we voted their motion down, 10 to 1 (Richards was the 1; Johnson is not an execuvite [sic] member). Did they withdraw? No, worse luck, they didn't.... Further, under pressure, they agreed to give an answer to the table officers, by Monday night, that either (1) they are proceeding with their threat and are leaving us, outright; or (2) they will withdraw their threat and play the game.... I doubt if they will resign. They would rather have us put them out. We know it's bad business, but it's worse to keep them in at this crucial time....[94]

Unquestionably, the continuation of this major--and fundamental--conflict into 1945 had to affect Alex Brown's candidature as that federal election loomed nearer.

Although provincial CCF leaders were anxious that the local constituency organization should undertake the necessary disciplinary steps,[95] it was the provincial council of the CCF that ultimately expelled the unbending Dr. Johnson. Although the Brandon executive attempted to condemn this decision to expell Johnson, the local membership by a vote of thirty-six to twenty-six refused to support their executive's opinion.[96] Dr. Johnson, Brandon's M.L.A., had been expelled from the party and his local association had officially accepted that decision. However, as the majority of the Brandon CCF executive consequently resigned and as a petition protesting Johnson's expulsion was endorsed by ninety Brandonites, one can conclude that the CCF in Brandon were badly divided on the eve of the two very important general elections in 1945. In fact, they almost seemed determined "to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory!"

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[94] PAC, CCF Records, vol. 98, Stanley Knowles to David Lewis, February 18, 1945. Lewis was very much in favour of the CCF making a determined stand on this issue. Ibid., David Lewis to Stanley Knowles, February 21, 1945

[95] "I hope you will be able to succeed in winning the support of their local organizations so that the action to be taken against them will be taken not by the top but by their own rank and file." Ibid., vol. 61, David Lewis to Don Swailes, March 5, 1945

While the CCF tore themselves apart internally, Brandon area Conservatives concerned themselves with the fundamental question of the choice of the candidate. They had, in early 1944, unsuccessfully petitioned their party leader, John Bracken, to stand for Brandon[97] while Colonel "Art" Ross, M.P. for Souris and their Manitoba organizer, campaigned quietly on behalf of a young Brandon lawyer, Whitby Kerr.[98] While some Brandon Conservatives apparently considered--and quickly rejected--the idea of an Independent or a coalitionist candidate,[99]

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96. Brandon Daily Sun, May 2, 1945. The local membership also elected Peter McDuffe--the man who would emerge as the "official" CCF candidate within a few short weeks--to replace Johnson on the provincial CCF council. Ibid., March 22, 1945

97. PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, Morgan W.R. John to Bracken, May 3, 1944

98. Art Ross noted that some young Liberals, who were presumably disenchanted with the rather elderly Matthews, had encouraged Kerr to stand. Ross believed that Kerr could be persuaded to accept the nomination even though "both Mayor Young and John Thompson are angling for the nomination...." Ibid., vol. 37, J. Arthur Ross to Bracken, January 4, 1944

99. Brandon Daily Sun, January 30, 1945

the major emphasis was on the desirability of locating a "Brandon" man "to counteract the vote that both Brown and Matthews will get from the city polls."[100] That nomination did eventually go to ex-Mayor Fred Young, the coalition's unsuccessful candidate in that recent provincial by-election,[101] who was selected over L.A.C. John Thompson, another "loser" of 1940 fame, and one J.H. Sibbald of Brandon.[102] Brandon Conservatives, it would appear, were lacking "new blood" in 1945.

The 1945 federal election was unusually important in that the nature and character of post-war politics would be largely determined by its outcome. It was an election in which the voters looked to the future--in which issues such as "Rehabilitation, taxation reform, agriculture, housing, employment, social security" were of national importance.[103] "Lack of patients in the new Brandon Military hospital...five-year euglization [sic] plan for farmers' income tax Housing-urban and rural"[10] were thought to be significant local issues in this growing market-centre.

The seventy-six year old J.E. Matthews, who had reconsidered his earlier plans to retire,[105] stressed the need for Mackenzie King's re-election as he claimed that the next five years would be as crucial to Canada as the previous five. However, Matthews also emphasized what the King government had done in those last five years: the war plants and air bases that had come to the Brandon constituency in such numbers that the Brandon M.P. had been called "Airport Matthews";[106] and the Family Allowances which were already an accomplishment, and not just a promise.[107]

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[100] PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C.H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945. Johnston was the president of the local PC Association and he claimed that his views were shared by his executive.

[101] The 1945 federal contest in Brandon was, thus, an all urban affair. This statement is based on the assumption that A.E. Smith, the ex-Brandon resident, could be described in these terms.

[102] Brandon Daily Sun, April 5, 1945

[103] PC Association, file M-B-1. The source is a Progressive Conservative constituency analysis prepared prior to the 1945 federal election.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Brandon Daily Sun, March 14, 1945

While the CCF, as an opposition party, should normally have been on the offensive and while they seemed to have an exceptionally popular candidate who should have enjoyed a broad, personal appeal,[108] the aggressive tactics of the Drew government in Ontario[109] combined with the strident anti-socialist campaign of "non-partisan" bodies such as the "Public Information Service"--which stated unequivocally that "every CCF candidate is committed to complete State Socialism, and State Socialism spells slavery....under an Absolute dictatorship"[110]--kept the CCF primarily on the defensive throughout the campaign. While Alex Brown did attempt to focus on local issues by deploring the "wanton and callous destruction" of army supplies, including medicines, which had followed the transfer of the local Artillery training unit; by stressing his strong personal interest in rehabilitation;[111] and by refreshing the electorate's memories of the Depression with photographs of the unemployed during the Bennett and King years;[112] the CCF were forced to spend much of their time (and money) in refuting the "shameful lies" of their opponents.[113]

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., May 30, 1945

[108] The above noted Progressive Conservative constituency report described Alex Brown in respectful terms: "A former Liberal and fairly popular due to the fact that he travels in the neighbouring rural area as an entertainer specializing in elocution and scotch readings." PC Association, file M-B-1. A prominent Brandon Conservative also described Brown as "a well known and popular druggist...." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 47, C.H. Johnston to Bracken, March 2, 1945. Brown explained that the "roots" to his political radicalism lay in the poverty of his native Scotland from which he had emigrated in 1913. In common with many recent British immigrants, he had returned in 1914 to fight in the Great War. After studies in pharmacy at the University of Manitoba, Brown had returned to Brandon in 1925. Brandon Daily Sun, November 9, 1944

[109] Drew, of course, had ensured that the Ontario provincial election would be held just prior to the 1945 federal election.

The Conservatives, despite their expressed preference for a Brandon resident as their candidate, paid little attention to local issues. Although Fred Young did stress his opposition to railway amalgamation--

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110. This organization, which advertised extensively in the 1945 federal election campaign, was headed by one B.A. Trestrail. Its message was direct—and compelling:

> "...even though a CCF candidate be your minister, or your son's teacher, or a member of the Armed Forces, or a personal friend, you simply cannot vote for him (or her) unless you want to forfeit the freedom which our boys have fought so desperately to preserve."

Brandon Daily Sun, April 26, 1945

111. Ibid., June 8, 1945

112. Pictures of the "Bennett camps" combined with the reminder that one million Canadians were on relief during King's administration constituted the last CCF advertisement of the campaign and it indicates, as well, the thrust of their appeal. Ibid., June 9, 1945

113. Ibid., May 29, 1945. Actually the CCF--both nationally and in Manitoba--were desperately short of funds in 1945: "The National office is in a terrible financial situation, entirely due to the failure of provinces like Manitoba to carry out their obligations to us. Thus, Manitoba now owes us on regular monthly quota over $4,000.00. In addition to that Manitoba still owes us $1,000.00 on their commitment on the federal election campaign fund." PAC, CCF Records, vol. 60, David Lewis to H.A. Chappell, November 28, 1945

an important issue in this railroad centre,[114] the Progressive Conservatives' main argument was that Bracken led the only party that could win a majority. George Drew's Conservatives had just swept Ontario and that victory presumably gave the PCs a commanding lead in the June 11, 1945, federal election.[115] Thus, Brandon PCs exhorted their fellow constituents in their last message to "FOLLOW ONTARIO's LEAD."[116]

Brandon voters, however, were not seemingly influenced by the example of the Ontario provincial election as the seventy-six year old incumbent Matthews led both the rural (3,852) and the Brandon polls (2,625) with a total of 6,478 votes. Ex-Mayor Fred Young, a strong second in the rural area (2,179) but a third place finisher in his own city (2,162), was second with 5,341.[117] Alex Brown, despite his reported rural popularity as an entertainer, polled fewer votes in the more populous rural polls (2,094) than he did in the city (2,465) for an overall total of 4,559. A.E. Smith's support, it is interesting to note, was divided equally between rural (230) and urban (233) although his total vote of 463 was rather dismal in light of his earlier political success in 1920.[118] Thus, Brandon was one of ten Manitoba constituencies which elected a "ministerialist" Liberal M.P. in 1945[119] and the city itself, as did the bulk of Manitoba voters, even gave the second largest number of votes to the CCF candidate.[120] Federal politics in Brandon in 1945 was at what could be called its state of "normalcy."[121]

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[114] Brandon Daily Sun, June 9, 1945. According to the 1946 census returns, 560 people or 8.69% of the local work force were, broadly speaking, "railway employees." Census of Prairie Provinces, 1946, vol. 2, 41

[115] Thus, the Conservatives argued optimistically that they needed only forty-four seats in addition to Ontario's eighty-two to give them a bare majority! Brandon Daily Sun, June 6, 1945

[116] Ibid., June 9, 1945

[117] Young later contended that the results could have been more favourable to him: "I am satisfied that the Brandon Federal seat can be won if a reasonable amount of work is done, and some speakers are made available for the campaign.

As you know Barbara's husband was killed in the Pacific during the last election and I missed about ten days in the rural part of the constituency, but in the rural parts at which we held meetings, we had fair success....

My experience in the last campaign (which I am positive would have been won if I had one or two speakers to help me...." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 107, F.H. Young to Bracken, March [no date], 1949

This generalization was also generally true in the case of the overseas voters, who were themselves one of the unusual features of that 1945 federal election.[122] The Conservatives, who estimated that

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118. A.E. Smith did not advertise extensively although he did court the support of the supposedly substantial Dwight Johnson vote by publicizing Dr. Johnson's own inability to accept CCF policies. Brandon Daily Sun, June 2, 1945

119. It should be noted that these totals were exclusive of the overseas vote which was not reported until later. The combined, official totals which were published later were Matthews--6,870; Young--5,621; Brown--5,294; and Smith--497. Ibid., June 22, 1945

120. The Liberals won 34.7% of the popular vote in Manitoba; the CCF 31.6%; and the PCs 24.9%. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 257. The results in Brandon City were in the same order but they were somewhat closer: Matthews--35.08%; Brown--32.93%; Young--28.88%.

121. One "abnormal" feature of this 1945 federal election campaign was the fact that wartime restrictions such as gas rationing could be very significant. Each candidate received forty extra "coupons" and the party strategists attempted to divide these effectively. For example, one coupon was deducted from each allotment to provide for travel by party leaders and an effort was made to increase the rural allowances at the expense of the urban ridings. PC Association, file M-M-3a, R.A. Bell to R.D. Guy, April 24, 1945

122. One of the interesting facets of this 1945 campaign was the fact that the next of kin of eligible voters who were currently prisoners of war were entitled to case a ballot on behalf of the prisoner. PC Association, file E-6-G(1), R.A. Bell to all candidates and constituency presidents, April 19, 1945

there were an average of 4,000 service votes per constituency,[123] had recommended that each local campaign organization write to those overseas voters even in advance of the writs being issued and that cigarettes and local newspapers be sent. While the Conservatives were confident that the men overseas were fully aware of the Mackenzie King government's war record, they feared that the CCF's war record was being effectively camouflaged.[124] Whether the results of the overseas vote verified that "fear" as Alex Brown, the CCF nominee, decisively outpolled all his rivals with 733 votes remains, however, as a question. The fact that J.E. Matthews, despite the King government's war record, placed second with 392 votes[125] while the Conservatives were third with 321[126] may suggest that overseas voters were more concerned with "tomorrow," rather than they were with "yesterday." Those same overseas voters were also presumably isolated from the effects of the "scare" campaign directed against the CCF. Hence, Alex Brown did better "abroad" than he did "at home."[127]

There was nothing, however, that could be described as "normal" about politics in Brandon at the provincial level in 1945. Although

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123. However, only 1,450 overseas votes were cast for the Brandon constituency. Brandon Daily Sun, June 19, 1945

124. PC Association, file E-6-G(1), R.A. Bell to all candidates, [no date]

125. It should be noted that J.E. Matthews had been a strong advocate of conscription. For example, he had deplored the fact that Brandon farmers were forced, by 1942, to work 300 plus acres on their own, due to the number of local men who had enlisted while other sections of the country had not responded equally. Brandon Daily Sun, June 23, 1942

126. A.E. Smith, on the other hand, polled only four votes. Ibid., June 19, 1945

127. While the Sun reported that the overseas vote, in general, was pro-CCF, one suspects that Brown's performance was well above-average. Ibid.

Dr. Johnson--who was standing as an Independent CCF candidate--had asked the CCF organization in Brandon for their support,[128] the "official opposition" proceeded to nominate Peter McDuffe, a stationary engineer at the city-waterworks plant and a school board member.[129] Meanwhile, the Conservatives and the Liberal-Progressives had each appointed a small committee which met together to establish the "ground rules" for choosing another "coalitionist" candidate.[130] As each party was represented by two voting delegates for each of the twenty-two polls, eighty-eight voting delegates had to choose between Mayor L.H. McDorman, a Liberal-Progressive, and Charles Johnston, a retired C.P.R. roadmaster and the President of the Brandon PC Association.[131] McDorman, who was nominated by Cam Donaldson—a prominent Conservative, won the coalitionist nomination, presumably with the assistance of Conservative votes. As Fred Young, a Conservative, had lost to Dr. Johnson in the 1943 by-election, some Conservatives may have quietly agreed that it should be the Liberal-Progressive's turn in 1945.

Local issues and "interests" were a central part of this rather unusual election campaign. For example, McDorman argued that neither

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[128] Alex Brown, the 1945 federal candidate and the chairman of this CCF nominating convention, angrily described this request as an act of "unmitigated gall." Ibid., September 19, 1945

[129] Alex Brown and William Stubbor, who were also nominated, declined in favour of McDuffe. Ibid.

[130] Admittedly, a small minority of Brandon Conservatives had wanted their own separate candidate. The decision to choose a single representative was justified with a rather interesting argument: "Members held that provincial politics are getting in much the same state as municipal councils, and that the man best suited to act for the entire city, should be sent to Winnipeg." Ibid., September 14, 1945

[131] Fred Young declined to stand as he proposed to seek election as mayor that fall. Ibid., September 26, 1945

Johnson nor McDuffe would receive a very sympathetic hearing from the Garson government. It was, therefore, in Brandon's interest to elect the coalitionist (i.e., "ministerialist") candidate, as he could best take care of the city's interests. McDuffe, on the other hand, stressed the need to re-open Brandon's Normal School due to the shortage of qualified teachers; the necessity for improved service at the Manitoba Liquor Commission; the desirability of moving the headquarters of the Manitoba Power Commission from Winnipeg to Brandon; and the need for more housing.[132] While McDorman and McDuffe campaigned most extensively against each other, both men--on occasions--took "political shots" at Dr. Johnson, the incumbent.[133] It was a rather unique election contest.

Although L.H. McDorman--the coalitionist--won that election, the division within the "political left" was a major, if not determinant, factor in his success. While McDorman was the first choice for 3,088 Brandon voters, McDuffe (who was a "surprising" second with 1,650[134]) and Johnson (with 1,554) together received 3,204 first choice votes. Has the CCF remained united, their 1943 by-election victory might well have been repeated. However, the extent of the divisiveness within that group was substantiated when Dr. Johnson's second choices were counted. Only 396 of those 1,554 voters gave McDuffe their second vote while 200 of those Johnson supporters opted for McDorman. Thus, the vast majority of Johnson's supporters would not vote CCF in 1945—even as a second choice—and McDorman, the coalitionist, was the beneficiary of that conflict. However, McDorman's own support—consisting as it did of a combination of Liberal and Conservative voters—was quite substantial, particularly in the city's central areas where he won a majority of the polls. In addition, McDorman—the "ministerialist" candidate—even placed second to McDuffe in the pro-CCF north and east end polls.[135] A sizable number of electors in the city's north and east end—and in the city as a whole—presumably voted "ministerialist" in their own interests. A combination of traditional Liberal-Conservative strength; the self-interest of the "ministerialist" appeal; and the bitter dissension within the "political left" had combined together to defeat the incumbent (and personally attractive) Dr. Johnson[136]—who was now succeeded by a rather non-descript coalitionist supporter.

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[132] Ibid., September 19, 1945. The CCF also warned the workers that "Big Business" would proceed to smash unions and to cut wages now that the War was over. Ibid., October 9, 1945. In addition, McDuffe supporters placed full page advertisements in the Sun extolling the achievements of the CCF government in Saskatchewan. Ibid., October 11, 1945. Furthermore, T.C. Douglas (and several of his cabinet) returned to Brandon to assist in the campaign.

[133] McDuffe's advertisements, for example, warned that a vote for "any candidate other than the official CCF candidate is a vote against the CCF." Ibid., October 9, 1945. The pro-coalitionist Sun, for its part, attempted to belittle Johnson's previous success by explaining that some 3,000 Brandon electors had simply failed to go to the polls! Ibid., October 10, 1945

[134] At least the Sun was surprised that McDuffe placed ahead of Johnson. Ibid., October 16, 1945

Although elections occurred at all three political "levels" in 1945, there was little apparent correlation between the municipal election and the two general elections that had preceded it. For example, there was no apparent "party" activity in this civic election, despite the strenuous partisan struggles of the last few months. Perhaps, the internal troubles and electoral failures of the CCF in 1945 explain that party's absence from this municipal campaign. If so, the absence of the CCF would, in itself, eliminate the "need" for any other "party" involvement. While some aldermanic candidates such as Harry Spafford, C.H. Johnston and R.O. Lissaman were well known party people,[137] the majority did not have a very high political profile. In addition, those who did have a definite political identification fared rather badly.[138] The defeat of eighteen-year-veteran Alderman Harry Spafford was one of the notable--~~and~~ startling--results of that municipal election.[139] Perhaps the multiplicity of candidates[140] and the relatively small 43% voter response[141] together explain that setback. CCF supporters, discouraged by a double defeat in 1945, may simply have "given up" during the municipal election.[142] If that was so and if ex-Mayor Fred Young's loss to fellow Conservative Frank Williamson by a vote of 2,046 to 2,543 (his third defeat in three years at three different levels) was, in any way, related to his defeat earlier in the War as a federal PC candidate, one might conclude that there was a stronger (albeit negative) correlation between the three levels of politics than one would have initially assumed.

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[135] The results in those 6 polls were McDuffe—622; McDorman—455; and Johnson—441. Ibid.

[136] The CCF in Manitoba subsequently attempted to resolve the differences of the last few months—differences that had presumably cost them the Brandon constituency. While Berry Richards, who had won re-election as an Independent (without having to oppose an "official" CCF candidate), was reinstated; a motion to reinstate Dr. Dwight Johnson was defeated by a vote of eighty to thirty. PAC, CCF Records, vol. 62, Minutes of Convention, December 6-8, 1945. Perhaps the success of Richards and the defeat of Johnson had affected the respective dissident's willingness to compromise as well as the delegates' tolerance of previous indiscretions?

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[137] C.H. Johnston had been president of the local Conservatives and R.O. Lissaman would later be elected as a Conservative M.L.A.

[138] Alderman Spafford placed an unsuccessful seventh, C.H. Johnston was tenth while R.O. Lissaman was a rather dismal eleventh! Federal PC candidate Fred Young also failed to recover the mayoralty office that he had previously held.

[139] Spafford, whose 1,595 votes placed him well below fifth place finisher Alderman John Popkins' 1,796 votes, seemingly blamed his defeat on those who had failed to vote: "I accept your decision, and to those who failed to exercise their franchise your cure is compulsory voting." Brandon Daily Sun, November 29, 1945

[140] There were sixteen aldermanic candidates, four of whom were seeking election to an one year term. Perhaps, the return to peace time "normalcy" and the decision not to extend the financial supervisor's term beyond 1947 (ibid., November 28, 1945) led to this renewal of interest in municipal government.

[141] There were 10,724 eligible voters in Brandon at the time of the 1945 federal election and 4,589 voted in that year's mayoralty election. Ibid., May 14, 1945

There is a calm that follows--as well as precedes--the storm and the relative inactivity that followed in the wake of the tumultuous political activity of 1945 would seem to be consistent with that analogy. While council, in 1946, faced an unusual number of time-consuming problems and despite the fact that it was a good year--in terms of booming property sales and a generally improved financial outlook,[143] 1946 also proved to be one of those several years in which all the aldermanic candidates were elected by acclamation.[144] While some such uncontested elections could be explained by the total absorption of the electors in the War, the Depression or whatever major crisis was occuring at that particular moment, there was no plausible explanations for the apparent disinterest that prevailed in 1946--except that it was the year that followed "the storm."[145]

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[142] Spafford's vote was several hundred below his long-term "average."

[143] Brandon Daily Sun, October 3, 1946

[144] Ibid., November 15, 1946

Although 1947 would also be an "election free" year, there was a considerable amount of political activity, especially on the part of Brandon Conservatives. As John Bracken's Neepawa constituency was to be merged with the Portage constituency due to redistribution, Brandon Conservatives offered the local nomination to Bracken in late 1945 and the federal Conservative leader subsequently accepted.[146] While local Liberals felt no need to follow the Progressive Conservative example of nominating early, their party had its usual annual constituency and provincial meetings.[147] One of the results of those meetings was the election of G.R. Rowe, a Brandon school principal and a minor

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145. Admittedly, there were some signs of political activity during that year. For example, seven Brandon voters, who had been absent from Manitoba due to war service at the time of the 1945 provincial election, did participate in the election for the armed services representatives to the Manitoba Legislature in January 1946. Ibid., January 14, 1946. Also two hundred Brandonites gathered at the Cecil Hotel to pay tribute to the seventy-seven year old J.E. Matthews, the oldest member of the House of Commons. Ibid., November 19, 1946. Finally the Conservatives appointed a new provincial organizer in the person of the twenty-seven year old Bill Wilton, a businessman--farmer from the Portage-High Bluff area, at a salary of $200 per month. PC Association, file M-M-3a, Cal C. Miller to R.A. Bell, December 20, 1946. The choice of Wilton, who would prove to have exceptional organizational abilities, could become politically significant in the months that lay ahead.

146. Bracken attempted to outline his basic social policies at that post-war meeting. While expressing real concern that the government's inflationary policies were increasing the cost of living, Bracken also stressed the need to provide social security for the very young and the aged. Those from sixteen to sixty-five years of age, however, had a responsibility to work. Brandon Daily Sun, November 19, 1947

147. The Hon. Paul Martin, currently the youngest member of the Mackenzie King cabinet, spoke at one of these meetings in Brandon in late 1947. The advertisements for that meeting proclaimed that Martin "is frequently mentioned as successor to Rt. Hon. W.L.M. King." Ibid., November 13, 1947

political figure, to the provincial presidency of the Manitoba Liberal-Progressive Association.[148]

This post-war era was proving to be one of economic expansion for Brandon. The city had enjoyed a small financial surplus in 1946; at least a dozen new industries had begun production in those twelve months;[149] and, in 1947, Brandon retailers apparently enjoyed their greatest year ever.[150] However, it was also evident that this prosperity was not as evenly distributed by 1947 as some might wish.[151] However, there is nothing to indicate that such economic disparities were truly politically significant. Rather municipal politics, in the absence of any recognizable "party" activity, had become essentially the politics of personalities.[152]

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148. Ibid., January 15, 1947. Rowe's wife, Kay, was elected English speaking secretary of the National Liberal Women's Association later that same year. Ibid., October 23, 1947. The election of Rowe to an important provincial political office in 1947 was probably personally politically significant for this man who subsequently emerged as the local Liberal-Progressive candidate in the 1949 provincial election.

149. Ibid., January 23, 1947

150. Ibid., December 31, 1947

151. Of the 4,015 residential dwellings in Brandon, only 53% had a telephone; just 32% were equipped with mechanical refrigerators; while a limited 32% of those families had an automobile. Ibid., September 19, 1947. In addition, the city, despite the protests of Alderman Burneskie who was himself a "north end" resident, decided that the extension of the city sewage system to the north side of the tracks was too expensive--and might never be economically feasible! This decision was particularly disappointing as sewage facilities had been "half promised" for years. Ibid., February 18, 1947

152. There is nothing particularly significant about the aldermanic elections in 1947 except to note that there were only seven candidates for the five two year terms and that the vote was heavier. The fact that the voters had to resolve the contentious issue of Dalight Savings Time (which they rejected 2,928 to 2,308) probably explains the increased turn out. Ibid., October 29, 1947. It is interesting to note as well that Mrs. D.R. Doig, a Brandon Women's Civic Association candidate, and Mrs. Dwight L. Johnson won election to the school board in 1947. The women of Brandon seemed to have determined that their political role was primarily at the school board level.

For example, all three mayoralty candidates in 1947--Mayor Frank Williamson, ex-Mayor Fred Young and veteran Alderman James Kirkcaldy--talked in similar terms: of the city's financial status; of the need for senior citizen housing; and of the need for more provincial and federal dollars for municipal government. Undoubtedly, the incumbent mayor enjoyed some advantage in this relatively prosperous era. However, one must conclude that his overwhelming re-election victory by a vote of 3,770 to Young's 1,709 and Kirkcaldy's 374 was due primarily to his own personal political appeal which may have been partly based upon the fact that he was both the youngest and the "newest" of the three candidates.[153]

The fact that John Bracken, the national Conservative leader, was to be the local Conservative candidate in the next federal election obviously affected the nature of politics in the Brandon constituency. For example, while campaigns were normally of eight to ten weeks duration, the preliminary organizational work for Bracken's campaign began--to some degree--in early 1948.[154] Admittedly, Bracken was disappointed by the pace of that activity: "Off the record I can tell you that he feels that the local people have been a bit slow and they should get ahead at once with organization in the towns and with the polls in the city of Brandon, leaving the spring and summer months for organization work in the rural polls."[155] As the election of Bracken in that constituency was naturally of vital importance to the party, more outside help and money was available than usual. The recently appointed Manitoba organizer, as an example, supervised the selection of zone chairmen (who, in turn, would manage three polls each[156]) and, in addition, he conducted "tests" in one poll to determine how effectively the job of poll organization could be done.[157] "Money" did generate some difficulty as local leaders believed that they had been promised $2,000 for organizational work in 1947 and they had received only $250 by early 1948.[158] Although the promised sum was intended to cover expenses for the twelve months following Bracken's nomination,[159] the amount was still significantly larger than local constituencies normally received--as in the example of the 1938 Brandon by-election campaign.

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[153] James Kirkcaldy, the dean of city council, had first been elected in 1907 (*ibid.*, October 22, 1947); Frank Young had been elected initially in 1922 (*ibid.*, October 23, 1947); Frank Williamson, however, had become active in municipal politics only in 1939. *Ibid.*, October 24, 1947

[154] The Conservative organizational strategy was to concentrate initially on their most hopeful areas and then, later, to concern themselves with their weakest sections. Brandon, which the PCs had lost by 1,245 votes, was considered to be one of the areas of strength which should be organized first. The seats which were represented by PC members would be left to those M.P.'s. PC Association, file M-M-3a, R.A. Bell to W.R. [sic] Wilton, January 17, 1947

Bracken's July 1948 resignation as national Conservative leader--for reasons of ill health[160]--led to a series of rumours that the veteran politician would retire from politics prior to the next election.

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[155] Ibid., file M-B-1, R.A. Bell to W.K. Wilton, February 6, 1948. Bell was the party's national director while Wilton was Manitoba organizer.

[156] Ibid., W.K. Wilton to Bracken, March 1, 1948

[157] Art Pearson, a young party activist, was to organize poll twenty-three to the extent that every PC supporter in that poll was to be contacted.

[158] PC Association, file M-B-1a, R.L. McQuarrie to R.A. Bell, February 2, 1948

[159] Ibid., R.A. Bell to R.L. McQuarrie, February 6, 1948

[160] The pro-Conservative Sun, however, suggested rather strongly that opposition from the "old guard" had severely hindered his attempts to lead the party in a "progressive" direction. Brandon Daily Sun, July 30, 1948. The implication of this and other editorials was that Bracken was being "forced out."

Bracken, however, was prepared to stand again and Brandon Conservatives, for their part, reaffirmed their confidence in his candidature.[161] Consequently, local Conservatives maintained an accelerated pace of activity--led by their new president, J. Cam Donaldson, the wealthy owner of Brandon Packers and Brandon's future M.L.A. Donaldson's drive--as demonstrated by a December 1948 executive meeting at which each member was given "a job to do through the winter"[162]--could be of vital importance in a closely contested constituency fight.

None of the partisan spirit which motivated the Conservatives to engage in such extensive pre-election activity was, however, evident in the 1948 "off year" civic election. In fact, there were no apparent "issues"[163] in that campaign and certainly no "party" involvement as such. Candidates simply appealed for the voters' support on the strength of their personalities as they did not bother to provide the voters with any of the promises and debates that are a normal part of the election process.[164] Public interest and "party involvement" in municipal affairs may well have been some of the less noted casualties of the second World War.

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[161] This was done at the Brandon meeting which was held to elect delegates to the leadership convention which would choose Bracken's successor. Ibid., August 11, 1948. While Bracken did later offer publicly to step aside in favour of a younger candidate (ibid., October 29, 1948), there is no evidence to indicate that this possibility was ever seriously contemplated.

[162] PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 180, W.K. Wilton to Bracken, November 27, 1948. One of the advantages of having a wealthy businessman as president of the association was that he could hold large dinner meetings at the Prince Edward Hotel--at his own expense!

[163] While the housing shortage, the higher cost of living, a six to twenty-four month backlog in telephone applications (Brandon Daily Sun, September 8, 1948), and an increase in the local property tax rate from 46 to 49 1/2 mills were undoubtedly of considerable importance and an irritation to many, only an estimated 30% of the eligible electorate went to the polls. Ibid., October 27, 1948

Brandon had seemingly entered into a new era by 1949. The worst of the post-war era had passed. The housing shortage appeared to have lessened;[165] the new (and pre-paid) water treatment facility was in operation; the city's capital debt had been reduced to $95,000;[166] the city's population had finally reached 20,000;[167] and this western Manitoba market centre now even had airline connections with the outside world--thanks to its new municipal airport and T.C.A. After two decades of economic turmoil and dislocation, life in Brandon in 1949 was returning to a state of "near normalcy."

The city's economic progress and the public satisfaction which was a logical by-product of that growth was an integral part of the 1949 federal election campaign. While the CCF made "brave noises" that they were going to launch a major bid for office with over 200 candidates,[168] the CCF did not even field a candidate in Brandon after Samual Johnston, their "unofficial" choice, was hospitalized for an extensive period of time due to an automobile accident.[169] As a result, the contest in Brandon was clearly between the two "old-line" parties, despite the "surprise" candidature of the Independent, Dr. D.L. Johnson.[170] J.E. Matthews, who was eighty years old in 1949, had, according to his own statement, decided to retire from politics. However, the Liberals were afraid that a new candidate would not be able to hold the seat against the well-known Bracken.[171] As a result, Matthews was apparently subjected to considerable pressure--even by the new Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent, who announced, during his April 1949 visit to Brandon, that he had been able to persuade the reluctant Matthews "to stand"

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[164] The results of this election were not particularly noteworthy, except in that there were fewer railway employees seeking and winning elections in this post-war era. Why this should be so cannot be determined. However, the percentage of the local work force who were railway employees had remained quite constant--i.e., 8.5% in 1936 (Census of Prairie Provinces, 1936, vol. 2) and 9.03% in 1951. Census of Canada, 1951, vol. 4. The predominance of certain individuals was still evident, however, as A.K. Burneski and B.L. Patterson led the polls by a sizable margin. Brandon Daily Sun, October 27, 1948

[165] Ibid., June 4, 1949

[166] Ibid., January 4, 1949. The debt had been approximately two million dollars in 1937 when the city had been forced to default on interest and capital payments. The remaining sum would hopefully be paid by the end of 1951.

[167] The city's population in 1949 was 20,045. Ibid., May 12, 1949. While the total population had increased, the area "north of the tracks" had suffered a slight drop in population.

[168] Ibid., January 31, 1949

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169. Johnston, a C.P.R. trainman and the secretary of the Brandon CCF Association, had not been nominated at the time of the accident but the local executive did not believe there was sufficient time either to locate a candidate or to conduct a proper campaign. Ibid., June 1, 1949

170. Dr. Johnson filed only hours before the deadline. It would appear that the nomination of this ex-CCF M.L.A. was caused by the CCF party's decision not to nominate. At least Dr. Johnson immediately wrote to J. Selbie, the president of the Brandon CCF, seeking that body's support. Ibid., June 21, 1949. While there is no record of the response to that request, L.V. Robson of Deleau, one of the area's most prominent CCF members, did sign Dr. Johnson's nomination papers.

171. This, as least, was the opinion of the president of the Manitoba Liberal Federation:

> "Brandon would be certain only if J.E. Matthews, the present member, ran against Bracken. I don't think anyone else could take it away from Bracken except Matthews. On the other hand if Bracken didn't run then I think we could take the seat with someone else."

PAC, National Liberal Federation Papers, vol. 657, Irving Keith to H.E. Kidd, March 5, 1949 again.[172] Thus, two veteran politicians faced each other--and Dr. Johnson--in that memorable encounter.

The campaign was actually rather "weird" in that all three candidates approached the electors from rather divergent positions. Although Dr. D.L. Johnson[173] could detect no significant difference between these two old line parties who were united in coalition in Manitoba and who would, he argued, coalesce in Ottawa as soon as the "Peoples Representatives" became a threat to their predominance,[174] the two principal candidates could never be accused of false modesty, whatever other transgression they may have committed. Matthews, as the incumbent with eleven years service, stood both on his own personal record and on that of the government's. John Bracken, for the most part, ignored the Conservative party that had just accepted his "resignation" as leader: instead, he (and his propagandists) concentrated on what Bracken, as premier of Manitoba, had done for the Brandon constituency.[175] For example, Matthew's advertisements unabashedly proclaimed that the city's economic and population growth were due to Liberal policies and to his own efforts as the area's representative. The voters were, therefore, urged to vote for "High Employment, Social Security, Continued Prosperity and Good Government."[176] Predictably, there was also a subtle allusion to Bracken's "outsider" status as the Liberals urged the electors to support "A Brandon Man For Brandon, Man."[177] The real conflict in the advertising campaign occurred, however, after Bracken claimed credit for saving the wheat pool in 1931; for "rescuing" Brandon Packers in the late 1930s from unfair competition; and for providing essential provincial aid for the beleaguered Brandon College.[178] Brandon Liberals responded quickly with their advertised counter-claims. The "Liberal"

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[172] Brandon Daily Sun, April 21, 1949. G.R. Rowe, the former president of Manitoba Liberal-Progressive Association and, subsequently, the party's candidate in the 1949 provincial election, was also nominated at the federal Liberal nominating convention. He did not, however, permit his name to stand. Ibid., May 16, 1949

[173] Johnson's wife was currently a member of the provincial executive of the Labour Progressive party. Ibid., December 13, 1948

[174] Ibid., June 14, 1949. The ex-M.L.A., who focused on such economic and social issues as the increased cost of living, rising unemployment, inadequate old age pensions, the low cost housing shortage and a general fear of a depression, also added a rather startling--and unusual--feature to Brandon politics by charging repeatedly that a "vote for the Liberals or the Tories is a vote for war and a vote against the happiness and well-being of the Canadian people." Ibid., June 15, 1949. Russia, on the other hand, "neither wants nor is she prepared for war." Ibid.

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175. Admittedly, George Drew's visit to Brandon during the campaign was described by the Sun as the "highlight" of the Conservative campaign. Ibid., June 1, 1949. Nevertheless, local advertising clearly stressed John Bracken--and his record--rather than Drew and the Progressive Conservative party. It is also interesting to note that Fred Young, the unsuccessful candidate in 1945 and now Bracken's campaign manager, suggested that the support of John Diefenbaker "in one or more meetings in Brandon...would help considerable in getting some extra urban support." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 107, F.H. Young to Bracken, March [no date], 1949

176. Ibid., June 4, 1949. Those same electors were also reminded that Matthews "has the heaviest mail of any private member" (ibid., June 11, 1949); that the re-election of the Conservatives would mean a return to 38¢ per bushel wheat (ibid., June 14, 1949); and that Matthews, even at eighty years of age, was actually "young"--according to the quoted definition of a Harvard sociologist! Ibid., June 25, 1949

177. Ibid. Bracken, in response, stressed his long time connection with Brandon: "It is now over forty years since my work in agriculture first brought me to Brandon and western Manitoba. To this city and community I have returned on almost countless occasions, this time in a different capacity from others." PAC, J. Bracken Papers, vol. 108, Bracken to all electors, [no date], 1949

178. Brandon Daily Sun, June 15, 1949

government of Manitoba had rescued the wheat pool; Dr. H.O. McDiarmid, one of Brandon's most prominent Liberals, had successfully "carried the torch" for Brandon Packers to the provincial authorities in Winnipeg; and it was the Liberals, the dominant force within Bracken's coalition government, who deserved credit for all the progressive legislation which had been produced![179] This campaign, once launched, could produce only the inevitable series of charges and counter charges: thus, Brandon Conservatives, in turn, responded to what they described as "Brandon Liberal Office Lies."[180] Fortunately, for the voters, it all had to end by June 27, 1949!

This several facet campaign took a related, but different, turn near the end as the Conservatives appealed to the community's "ego" by stating that "its time Brandon had a Cabinet Minister as its representative."[181] The Liberals, on the other hand, fashioned their final "pitch" in a slightly different fashion: after having stated emphatically that "Canada Will Vote Liberal on June 27,"[182] they appealed to Brandon voters to "Re-Elect a Supporter of the Government."[183] The campaign in the Brandon constituency, thus, concluded in this series of direct and indirect appeals to the constituency's and to the

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179. Ibid., June 17, 1949

180. Ibid., June 20, 1949. It should be noted that the Conservative accusations were directed at the "Brandon Liberal Office" and not, directly, at J.E. Matthews. Probably the eighty year old Matthews was considered to be above reproach while G.R. Rowe, Matthews's campaign manager, was not.

181. Ibid., June 14, 1949. The assumption was, of course, that Bracken would be appointed to the Conservative cabinet.

182. Ibid., June 25, 1949

183. Ibid.

elector's self-interest. While the Liberals warned those same voters, in several advertisements, to "Beware of the Roorback,"[184] Brandon electors went to the polls on June 27 without benefit of any further political harrassment! It has been a most intensive--and one suspects a wearying--campaign.

Despite the vituperative nature of the last few days of the campaign, only 70.9% of the eligible city voters went to the polls. The 74.8% response in the rural electorate[185] was slightly larger which, in itself, is interesting as the two "local" candidates were both Brandon residents. Perhaps this campaign of claims and counter-claims--charges and counter-charges--had "turned off" some of the uncommitted city voters? However, the strategists who had devised this campaign of appeal to the "ministerialist" vote had seemingly acted wisely for, as the Brandon Sun concluded, "Voters Here Follow Trend...."[186] In any event, the decision was most decisive as the eighty year old J.E. Matthews polled 10,836 votes to Bracken's 7,080.[187] As Dr. Johnson, the Independent, trailed badly with only 1,912 votes, the result was determined well in advance of the service vote which Matthews again won by an even larger majority.[188] While Matthews had decisive majorities in both city and rural polls, the strength of this former insurance salesman was greatest in his "home town" where he led the "outsider" Bracken[189] by the overwhelming total of 4,606 to 2,557. Dr. Johnson, although he was never "in the race," did poll 1,264 of his 1,900 plus votes in Brandon itself. While most of Johnson's strength was located in the traditional CCF areas--i.e., the north and east end of the city, Matthews still won those polls. In fact, the eleven year parliamentary veteran won forty-nine of the city's fifty-one polling stations. Brandon voters had elected a veteran politician who was both a popular, local resident and a "ministerialist candidate." It was, perhaps, an unbeatable combination?[190]

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[184] Ibid., June 22, 1949

[185] Ibid., June 28, 1949

[186] Ibid. This was certainly true in Manitoba where Liberal candidates won twelve seats, the CCF were victorious in three while the Conservative were limited to one representative! The national results were also comparable as the Liberals, with 193 seats, won their most decisive victory ever. The Conservatives with forty-one seats were a very distant second while the CCF trailed badly with thirteen members. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 272

[187] Brandon Daily Sun, June 28, 1949. These preliminary totals varied slightly from the "official" returns.

After that strenuous and sometimes bitter federal election campaign in the Brandon constituency, it is not surprising that local Liberal and Conservatives should have encountered difficulty in selecting a single coalitionist candidate for that fall's provincial election. Actually, the coalition, now headed by Premier D.L. Campbell with Conservative party leader Errick Willis serving as Deputy Premier, had displayed signs of internal dissension for several months prior to that federal election. Young Liberals in Manitoba were publically uncomfortable in the coalition; a Liberal-Progressive M.L.A., Edmond Prefontaine, had decided to sit as a "straight Liberal"; while three Conservative M.L.A.'s and an Independent broke with the coalition government during the pre-election 1949 legislative session.[191] The "opposition" Conservatives then combined, in mid 1949, with the Independent Liberal Prefontaine to form the Manitoba Democratic Movement, an organization which was dedicated to providing the voters with a non-socialist alternative to the government.[192] However, the greatest danger locally to the coalition would arise when Liberals and Conservatives attempted to choose a single coalitionist candidate. The nomination of a Liberal (over a Conservative) in the previously Conservative constituency of Minnedosa in 1948 had nearly led to all-out party warfare[193] and the inability of the two political parties in Brandon to agree on a common candidate did lead to a return to party politics--in a somewhat limited sense--in that constituency in 1949.

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[188] Matthews received 288 military votes to Bracken's 45. Johnson polled only eight service votes. Ibid., July 4, 1949. Thus, the overall totals were Matthews--11,263; Bracken--7,150; and Johnson --1,964. Ibid., July 12, 1949

[189] The Conservatives themselves may well have believed that Bracken's "outsider" status hurt him badly in this constituency. At least, one Conservative, while discussing possible candidates for the 1951 Brandon federal by-election, wrote: "P.S. Any Bracken or any Outsider is out." PC Association, file M-M-2, R.D. Guy to W.H. Kidd, December 19, 1950

[190] At least one Conservative organizer described J.E. Matthews as one "whom it was nearly impossible to beat so long as he wanted to run." Ibid., file M-B-1, L.F. Earl to W.H. Kidd, August 13, 1951

While the Liberals had decided, during their 1949 provincial convention in late September, to continue the coalition, the choice of G.R. Rowe as the Liberal-Progressive contender for the local coalitionist nomination may, in itself, have been quite significant.[194] The fifty-four year old school principal had been active in Brandon community and political activities for three decades: he was a past president of the Brandon Kinsmen Club; he had served as provincial president of the Manitoba Teacher's Society; he was a past president of the Manitoba Liberal Association;[195] and, more recently, he had served as campaign manager for J.E. Matthews in the rather bitterly fought 1949 federal election campaign. It would appear that the Liberal's choice of the somewhat controversial G.R. Rowe[196] made the selection of single, coalitionist nominee by the combined Liberal-Conservative forces rather difficult—if not unlikely. The events of that recent federal election campaign undoubtedly contributed to the difficulties of those provincial politicians who now tried to keep the 1940 coalition intact.

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[191] The three Conservatives were Dr. J.S. Poole of Beautiful Plains; G.S. Thorvaldson of Winnipeg; and M.D. Morrison of Manitou. Earl Collins, the Independent M.L.A. for Dufferin, also joined the opposition during that session.

[192] Certain "Independent PCs" who had been elected as such in 1945 were part of this movement as well. Brandon Daily Sun, October 22, 1949

[193] Part of the "Gentlemen's" agreement in 1940 was that Liberal and Conservative seats were to become the "preserve" of the incumbent party. The failure of the Conservative candidate, Mayor J.A. Burgess, to win the nomination in Minnedosa ensured that the Conservatives would lose that "Conservative" seat. Ibid., September 11, 1948

As the Liberal-Progressives had already chosen their candidate to present to the joint "coalitionist" nominating convention, Brandon Conservatives had to decide whether or not they would participate in that joint convention. When they failed in their initial attempts to resolve that question, a second meeting one week later was necessitated.[197] It was clear that some of the Brandon PCs were becoming restive within the coalition. E.S. Martin, for example, complained that the PCs were tired of "being led around by the nose"[198] while Mrs. Roy Wilton rather perceptively noted that the coalition should be disbanded as the CCF were no longer a danger.[199] In the meantime, three men--A.C. Pearson, the younger brother of constituency president William Pearson; S.A. Magnacca, a real estate dealer and recent unsuccessful aldermanic candidate; and one S.C. McLennan --agreed to seek the nomination although some of these three reportedly had reservations on the "coalition issue." The Conservatives, after that one week's further consideration, did agree--on division--to support a joint coalitionist candidate. However, the choice of that Conservative "convention" was J. "Cam" Donaldson, the fifty-eight year old president of the Brandon federal PC Association and the man whose energies had earlier impressed the provincial PC organizer, W.K. Wilton.[200] Cam Donaldson, a native of Brandon and a celebrated "success" story in his own right,[201] would now oppose G.R. Rowe in that coalitionist nominating

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[194] While Tim Bass, a member of the local Liberal executive reported that the incumbent M.L.A., L.H. McDorman, was prepared to stand again, G.R. Rowe was the only person nominated at that Liberal-Progressive convention! Ibid., October 13, 1949. McDorman, who had been content to be a rather quiet back-bencher, was reportedly in poor health by 1949 and it would appear as if local Liberals had quietly decided that a more aggressive candidate, such as G.R. Rowe "who had a lot of fight," would be desirable. Interview with Robert Clement, August 5, 1975. Rowe, in accepting that nomination, denied the rumour that Matthews intended to retire so that he (G.R. Rowe) could succeed to that federal seat.

[195] Rowe was also the current president of the Brandon provincial Liberal-Progressive Association. Brandon Daily Sun, October 13, 1949

[196] G.R. Rowe came to Brandon in September, 1922, to accept the principalship of Alexandra School apparently unaware of the fact that he was filling a vacancy caused by that year's Brandon teachers' strike. He was, as a result, subjected to considerable criticism. Interview with Mrs. G.R. Rowe, August 12, 1975

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197. Brandon Daily Sun, October 12, 1949

198. Ibid.

199. Ibid. Jack McDowell, on behalf of the Manitoba Democratic Movement, also addressed this meeting urging a return to "parliamentary government"--i.e., party politics.

200. After Steve Magnacca had declined to stand, Art Pearson was eliminated on the first ballot. Donaldson, the owner of Brandon Packer's--one of Brandon's largest industries, won the "nomination" on the second ballot over S.C. McLennan.

201. Donaldson had left Brandon to achieve notable business success in Winnipeg and then New York. However, he had returned to his home town in 1936 to establish a much needed industry which, by 1949, employed 165 persons. Brandon Daily Sun, October 25, 1949

convention consisting of eighty-four delegates, two per party per poll.

However, after four ballots, the convention remained deadlocked as each delegation evidently voted en masse for their own man. As the two "forces" appeared to be immovable and as the utilization of the preferential ballot would presumably minimize the effect of a "split" in the coalition vote, the convention (with the encouragement of Premier D.L. Campbell who was present throughout those four hours of balloting) agreed--on a motion by S.A. Magnacca (a Conservative) and J.B. Craig (a Liberal)--that each delegation should nominate its own candidate.[202] Consequently, G.R. Rowe, Liberal-Progressive coalitionist, and J. Cam Donaldson, Progressive Conservative coalitionist, were both nominated as government supporters in 1949 in addition to the "anti-coalitionist" W.R. Webb, a railway employee and a veteran CCF municipal politician who had been the first candidate to be nominated in this Brandon riding.[203] The stage was set for another of Brandon's several unusual elections.

As in the case of the Matthews-Bracken confrontation, the two coalitionist candidates in Brandon in the 1949 provincial election campaign appealed for the voters' support on the basis of their own personal accomplishments; the achievements of the coalition government which they both supported; and in the futuristic terms of what they could do for Brandon--once they were elected. First of all, both candidates concurred that it was in Brandon's interests to elect a coalitionist member. Thus, Cam Donaldson's advertisements simply exhorted the electors to "Put Brandon First Vote Coalition Vote Donaldson."[204] Rowe's advertisements boldly outlined the choice that was presented to Brandon electors.[205]

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[202] Ibid. October 19, 1949

[203] The CCF had actually called the meeting to plan for a nominating convention. However, as such a good representative group had attended, they decided to nominate therewith. Ibid., October 12, 1949

> Will it [Brandon] vote itself into the wilderness of opposition or will it truly vote Brandon 1.
>
> Brandon has a big stake in the Government of Manitoba. Grants of Social Services and Education in Brandon exceed annually $100,000.00.
>
> 1949 vote for Brandon Mental Hospital $866,380.00 with an additional capital outlay to provide an extra 108 beds $70,000.00
>
> Grants to Provincial Exhibition, Winter Fair, Livestock Shows and Horticulture $7,437.81.
>
> These figures are exclusive of Hydro, Telephones, Good Roads, Jail, Agriculture Courses in Normal School.[206]

While the implication was that Brandon voters should elect a coalitionist so that they could continue to share in the "goodies" of politics, the two candidates parted company on the question of which of these two coalitionists could best assist Brandon. G.R. Rowe, for instance, argued that the accomplishments of the coalition government should be primarily accredited to his party as the Liberal-Progressives constituted the major portion of that coalition.[207] In futuristic terms, Rowe's advertisements implied that the Liberal-Progressive caucus would continue to be most influential and that "Brandon's Voice will be Heard"[208] most effectively if it were part of that particular caucus. Donaldson's supporters, on the other hand, stressed the appeal of Donaldson, the "community" man--the twenty-six year member of the Chamber of Commerce; the twenty-two year member of Kiwanis; the five years of service on the prestigious Board of Directors of the Brandon General Hospital; the three year presidency of the Provincial Exhibition Board; and the successful businessman whose company contributed an annual cash flow of four million dollars to the Brandon area economy.[209] Donaldson, in fact, was described as an exceptionally qualified candidate who had agreed to stand only "in response to popular demand. Brandon must not let this opportunity of having forceful representation in the legislature pass."[210] According to newspaper accounts, the Conservatives also placed considerable stress upon the fact "that the Manitoba government is big business and [they] stress the fact that Mr. Donaldson is a businessman."[211]

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[204] Ibid., October 31, 1949

[205] Rowe stressed the fact that the coalition government's re-election was certain as it had eighteen seats "guaranteed" while the CCF--the principal opposition--were fielding only twenty-five candidates.

[206] Brandon Daily Sun, October 29, 1949

[207] Ibid., October 22, 1949

[208] Ibid., November 2, 1949

While G.R. Rowe particularly attempted to present himself as an individual with a separate identity from that of Donaldson's--as in his promise to seek badly needed provincial and federal aid for education[212] and in his contention that Donaldson--as an individual M.L.A.--could not bring the promised industry to Brandon,[213] the fact that all three candidates were compelled to seek those vital second choice votes[214] presumably helped to produce a more temperate political climate. Undoubtedly, the rather "undoctrinaire" campaign of W.R. Webb, the CCF candidate, who stressed the need for more industry, cheap electricity[215] and the widening of the First Street Bridge,[216] contributed to what the Sun later described as an "unusually high level" campaign.[217] Thus, the continuation of the coalition and the nature of the preferential ballot together helped ensure that the (partial) return to party politics at the provincial level in Brandon in 1949 was a reasonably subdued affair.

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[209] Ibid.

[210] Ibid., November 7, 1949

[211] Ibid., November 2, 1949

[212] Ibid., October 31, 1949. Rowe's views on education were supported by the information that he had served as a school principal for twenty-five years. Also, one of his advertisements urged the voters to "Elect G.R. Rowe, B.A." Ibid., November 8, 1949. The use of such evidence of higher educational achievement in political advertisements is most unusual. Whether it would be beneficial or not would be questionable.

Despite the claims that a Liberal-Progressive coalitionist would be heard most clearly in Winnipeg, Brandon voters, in 1949, elected Cam Donaldson, a Progressive Conservative coalitionist, by a very considerable majority on the "first" ballot. Donaldson polled 3,743 votes and he led in 28 of the city's 31 polling stations.[218] G.R. Rowe, the Liberal-Progressive coalitionist, was a rather weak second with 1,933 votes[219] while W.R. Webb, the only "anti-government" candidate, trailed with 1,478 votes--a total significantly lower than the traditional Labor- CCF vote in Brandon.[220] Although the elector's preference for a "government" candidate was quite pronounced, the extent of Donaldson's most decisive victory over Rowe--which occurred in a constituency previously represented by a Liberal-Progressive coalitionist[221]--must have been largely due to Donaldson's personal appeal. Nevertheless, by 1949, the political cycle in Brandon had swung again--to a point of renewed Conservative strength and declining CCF political fortunes. Brandon, to some degree, had reverted to the pattern of provincial politics in the 1930s.

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[213] Ibid., November 5, 1949

[214] For example, G.R. Rowe's advertisements urged the voters--including, presumably, Webb's supporters--"Don't Plump." Ibid., November 1, 1949

[215] Ibid., November 2, 1949

[216] Ibid., November 7, 1949

[217] Ibid., November 11, 1949

[218] One of the interesting results of the 1949 provincial election was the need of the Brandon federal Conservative association to elect new officers as both the president, Cam Donaldson, and the vice-president, Thos. Seens of Rivers, had been elected as M.L.A.'s. There was, therefore, a very close inter-relationship between provincial and federal politics within the ranks of the local PC party.

However, politics at the municipal level in 1949 was more reminiscent of the early 1900s than it was of the 1930s. The city, faced with several requests for salary increases from its own employees, levied a tax rate of 53.5 mills--the highest ever.[222] Tax increases of that nature had in the past been very politically damaging. That does not

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219. Rowe did win three of the city's north end polls. Brandon Daily Sun, November 11, 1949

220. Only 64.7% of the eligible voters went to the polls. Ibid. This rather average response may have been due to the fact that the reelection of the D.L. Campbell government was never in doubt.

221. The complex nature of provincial politics in Manitoba in 1949 made it very difficult to determine whether even the "coalitionists" and the "anti-coalitionists"--let along the several politicial "groupings" that existed--gained or lost in this particular election. However, "on the surface," it would appear as if there was no real change.

222. A major portion of that four mill property tax increase would be due to the increased requirements of the local school board which had presented its largest budget in Brandon's history. Council, however, was forced to accept that budget without alteration. Brandon Daily Sun, January 25, 1949. Thus, school costs of some $258,162.93 constituted a large percentage of the total civic budget of $726,263.49. Ibid., March 19, 1949

seem to have been the case in 1949 as Mayor Frank T. Williamson won re-election by acclamation in a municipal election which was undoubtedly over-shadowed by the provincial election campaign.[223] Perhaps, the relative prosperity of 1949 (i.e., Brandon was in the midst of a building boom[224]) compensated for any political injury caused by the tax increase.

Whether that post-war prosperity or the overall decline in the fortunes of the provincial and federal CCF contributed most to the disappearance of the long-time Labor- CCF factor in Brandon's municipal politics is not clear. Nevertheless, those municipal elections--such as that in 1949--became more lack-lustre as a result. Admittedly, there were still "special interest" candidates in 1949--such as the totally victorious "Young Men's Slate,"[225] the Brandon Women's Civic Association representative[226] and the Housewives' Consumers League candidate.[227] However, these "slates" of candidates did not foster the close interrelationship between municipal and the "higher" levels of partisan politics that had, on occasions, previously existed nor did

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223. The municipal elections were held on October 25, 1949, while the provincial election occurred on November 10, 1949 .

224. There was, in relative terms, no real unemployment in mid 1949. Brandon Daily Sun, June 23, 1949

225. The Young Men's Civic Association sponsored four municipal candidates in 1949--three for school board and one for council. Led by Dr. Robert Myers, the school board "slate" topped their polls while R.B. Alexander easily won the one year aldermanic term for which he was nominated. Ibid.

226. Mrs. D.R. Doig was this organization's successful candidate for school board. The association had tried in vain "to find" an aldermanic candidate. Ibid., September 30, 1949

227. School trustee (and Housewive's Consumers League candidate) Mrs. D.L. Johnson, who was reportedly more "radical" than her husband, was the only school board candidate to be defeated in the 1949 election. Ibid., October 26, 1949

they generate the same degree of civic interest that the "party" conflict of the 1920s had produced. While "party" politics at the municipal level had never displaced the individual personalities of the candidates as the chief political factor, the absence of such "party" politics meant that municipal politics in 1949 re-emerged, as it was in the early 1900s, essentially as the "politics of the individual."[228] Municipal politics in Brandon had gone the full cycle!

Thus, the decade of World War II and the subsequent post-war era had proved to be a decade of marked political change. Within those ten years, the Depression had given way to post-war prosperity; the city's financial position had been stabilized; the CCF had made their long anticipated surge only to find that success could be followed quickly by political defeat and near oblivion; and the provincial Conservatives had reappeared as the predominant force which they had been--except for brief interludes--since 1899. However, those ten years had not altered the status of James Ewen Matthews, the Liberal M.P. who, at eighty years of age, still represented Brandon on the "ministerialist" side of the House of Commons as the decade drew to a close. In fact, it is important to remember that Brandon was represented on the "ministerialist" side of the provincial legislature as well, ableit by a Progressive Conservative coalitionist. When one glances quickly back to 1899, one is struck by the fact that Brandon ended this era as she began it--in the "ministerialist" side of the house and with the "political establishment" fully in command. The war and post-war era, therefore, did mark in Brandon,

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228. For example, W.H. Boreskie, a railway employee and a longtime "independent" alderman, continued to place a strong third (2,575); after Stuart Schultz, a medical superintendent (2,987); and Arthur A. Harris, a life insurance agent (2,953). Ibid., October 26, 1949

despite the dramatic role of the CCF in that decade, a return to a state of "political normalcy."

Chapter IX

Conclusion

Brandon, in 1949, was represented both provincially and federally by government supporters--as it had been in 1899. Brandon municipally, in 1949, was governed by prominent individuals whose party affiliation seemed incidental to their success: nevertheless,the fact that they were predominantly Liberal or Conservative (and not "labour" or CCF) was evident--as it had been in 1899. Certainly the city had grown--from some 5,000 to approximately 20,000 residents--during those fifty years. While Brandonites, by 1949, were on the average slightly "older" and less "WASPish" than they had been at the "turn of the century,"[1] the community's identity remained essentially as that of a combined railway agricultural market centre and, of more direct significance, as Manitoba's "second city." Whether that sense of "special status" (or inferiority?) which was seemingly a by-product of living in Brandon--rather than in the metropolitan centre of Winnipeg--helps explain much of the city's political history is only one of several questions that has been considered in this analysis of "Politics in Brandon City, 1899-1949."

Ignoring the fifty municipal elections for a moment, there are several general "conclusions" that can be noted with respect to the sixteen provincial elections (including the by-elections in 1907 and 1943) and the fifteen federal elections (including the 1930 and 1938 by-elections) in which Brandon electors participated during the 1899-1949 era. First of all, the two traditional political parties enjoyed an almost equal amount of success in the Brandon constituency as the Liberals won nine and the Conservatives triumphed in thirteen election contests. The Liberals and Conservatives also successfully combined their forces in the 1917 federal election and in the provincial elections of 1922, 1927 and 1945. It is interesting to note that Brandon Conservatives were most predominant at the provincial level where they won ten contests as contrasted with three federal victories. While the Liberals, on the other hand, won eight federal election contests in the Brandon constituency, they only enjoyed one provincial victory--if one excludes L.H. McDorman's victory in 1945 as a (Liberal-Progressive) "Coalitionist." "Labour" and its successor, the CCF, achieved their two victories provincially in 1920 and in 1943 while the Progressives were successful at the federal level in the 1921 "three-way" contest as well as in 1925-26.[2] The predominance of the two "old-line" political parties seems to be quite pronounced.

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[1] According to the 1901 census returns, 83.2% of all Brandonites had British origins (Census of Canada, 1901, vol. 1); according to the 1936 returns, that number had declined to 72.86% (Census of Prairie Provinces, 1936, vol. 1).

Who were those politicians who successfully sought office in this community during the 1899-1949 era? First of all, the vast majority of the city's municipal leaders were business and professional men. The city's M.L.A.'s were a somewhat more diverse group as four were businessmen;[3] two of the city's provincial representatives were medical practitioners (i.e., Dr. Edmison and Dr. Johnson) while one was a dentist (Dr. S.W. McInnis); two members (i.e., George Coldwell and S.E. Clement) were lawyers; and one M.L.A.--A.E. Smith--was an ex-Methodist minister. On the other hand, the area's federal representatives included two lawyers (i.e., C. Sifton and J.A.M. Aikins); a Baptist college president (Dr. H.P. Whidden); a long-time farmer, ex-reeve and Grain Growers' leader (Robert Forke); a former president of the United Grain Growers (T.A. Crerar); a hotelkeeper (David Beaubier); and a retired insurance salesman (J.E. Matthews). Five of the M.L.A.'s and four of the M.P.'s who served during this era were born in Ontario;[4] one M.L.A. (Dinsdale) was born in England; one M.P. (Forke) was born in Scotland; and two M.L.A.'s and two M.P.'s were "Maritimers"--McInnis was born in New Brunswick, Matthews in Prince Edward Island, while both McDorman and Whidden were born in Nova Scotia. Although none of the area's M.P.'s were native Manitobans, two M.L.A.'s were so qualified--Dr. Johnson had been born in Rapid City and Cam Donaldson was a Brandonite to the core--i.e., by birth! In view of the predominantly Anglo-Saxon nature of the community, it is not surprising to discover that all the successful candidates were of British or Canadian origin.[5] All were apparently Protestant: five were Methodist; three were Anglican; and the others were Episcopalian; Salvation Army; Baptist; Union; Presbyterian; United and unknown.[6] Six M.L.A.'s were in their forties when elected; two were in their thirties;[7] one (Donaldson) was fifty-eight; while another (McDorman) was a somewhat elderly sixty-six. The M.P.'s in general tended to be older at the time of their initial election--four were in their sixties;[8] one (Whidden) was forty-six; while Crerar--who had been forty-one at the time of his initial election--was fifty-three when he won the 1930 by-election. However, Sifton, who had been only twenty-seven years old when he was elected provincially in 1888, was a notable exception to the generalization that M.P.'s tended to exceed M.L.A.'s in age as he was still a remarkably young thirty-five at the time of his 1896 federal by-election victory.[9] Finally, as is already quite evident, all were men--except for a small handful of women who won election at the municipal level.

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[2] It must, however, be noted that Forke won in 1925 in the absence of any Liberal opposition and he was, in 1926, officially nominated by both the Liberals and the Progressives.

[3] Chas. Adams, George Dinsdale, L.H. McDorman and J.C. Donaldson were all businessmen. Dinsdale, however, would probably be more accurately be classified as a "small businessman."

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[4] One of the four M.P.'s was Aikins who actually was born in the Canada West in 1851. The other three were Sifton, Crerar and Beaubier. The five M.L.A.'s were Adams, Coldwell, Clement, Smith and Edmison.

[5] Dr. Johnson preferred to identify his parents as "Canadians." Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1944

[6] L.H. McDorman was a Mason but his religious affiliation is not known. Brandon Sun, May 20, 1966

[7] The youngest M.L.A.'s were elected in the "earliest" years of the community: Sifton was twenty-seven in 1888; Adams was twenty-eight old in 1894; while McInnis was only thirty-four years old in 1899.

An interesting feature of federal politics in Brandon was that "parachute" candidates fared rather badly in this constituency.[10] While J.A.M. Aikins, a Winnipeg lawyer, was elected in 1911 and although T.A. Crerar, a "non-resident," won the 1930 by-election by acclamation, "outsiders" were unsuccessful on seven other occasions.[11] When one remembers that many observers contended that Aikins's 1911 victory was largely due to the decision of Clifford Sifton (the area's former Liberal M.P.) to support the Conservatives and that Crerar's uncontested 1930 by-election victory adds little or nothing to the analysis, one is left with the conclusion that local residency within the Brandon constituency was almost a prerequisite during this era. Furthermore, as four of the five "local" M.P.'s were actually residents of the City of Brandon itself, one is inclined to suggest that it was a political advantage--but not quite a necessity--for the candidate to reside in the city which traditionally comprised about 40% of the federal constituency's electorate.

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[8] The "elder" four included Aikins, who was sixty; Forke, who was sixty-one; Beaubier, who was sixty-six; and Matthews, "the elder stateman," who was sixty-nine when he first won election in 1938!

[9] It should be noted that all ages cited are somewhat approximate in that the year of the birth was merely subtracted from the year of the initial election.

[10] There were no instances of "parachute" candidates seeking election provincially in Brandon.

[11] For example, Hugh John Macdonald in 1900; R.L. Richardson in 1904; T.M. Daly in 1908; H.S. Paterson, the Winnipeger who stood as a Laurier Liberal, in 1917; T.A. Crerar in the 1930 general election; A.E. Smith in 1945; and John Bracken in 1949 constitute the long list of (often "big-name") "outsiders" who failed to conquer Brandon. It is interesting to note that four of the seven "parachute" candidates were Conservative or Conservative supported nominees.

It was an additional advantage--as one might expect--to be the incumbent in any electoral contest in Brandon. For example, while twenty-eight mayoralty contests (of which fifteen were uncontested) resulted in the re-election of the current mayor, incumbent mayors were defeated on just four occasions--and only when seeking "extended" terms in office.[12] Several aldermen--such as George Coldwell and Harry Spafford--compiled equally impressive personal "success" records which suggests that an incumbent municipal politician did enjoy a significant advantage.[13] A similar pattern was evident at the "higher" levels of politics as nine of the federal elections and seven of the provincial elections in this community were won by incumbents. Moreover, one of these successful incumbents--David Beaubier in 1935--won his personal re-election at a time when his party was being "annihilated" as its numbers fell from 137 to 40. It must also be noted that T.A. Crerar, the single incumbent M.P. to lose in this riding, had never actually "won" the constituency in the traditional sense. Even the four M.L.A.'s who were unsuccessful in their bid for re-election lost under rather significant circumstances: Chas. Adams was defeated in 1899 when the Liberal government of which he was part suffered a similar fate; S.E. Clement, after serving one term, lost in 1920 at a time when his party was "slipping badly"; A.E. Smith was overcome in 1922 when both of the opposing parties coalesced against him; while Dr. Dwight Johnson's expulsion from his party led to a divided CCF vote in 1945 and a "second ballot" victory for a rather "lack-lustre" government candidate. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that it was a tremendous political advantage to be the incumbent in Brandon politics.[14] Success, it would appear, breeds success.

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[12] Harry Cater suffered three of those defeats as he unsuccessfully sought a fifth yearly; an eleventh yearly; and a third two-year term of office! Dinsdale failed in 1921 to win a third successive one-year term.

[13] Part of Harry Cater's unprecedented "success story" could be explained simply in terms of this individual's willingness to seek re-election.

That there was some inter-relationship between the three levels of political activity in Brandon was evident: the degree of that inter-relationship was not, however, uniform. For example, although the vast majority of Brandon men who were unsuccessful contenders for provincial office had municipal experience,[15] only six of the city's ten M.L.A.'s were so qualified.[16] There was even less inter-relationship at the federal level as Clifford Sifton was the single "city" M.P. (of whom there were four) with municipal or provincial political experience. Thus, Whidden, Beaubier and Matthews sought and won election initially at the federal level. Although Robert Forke had an extensive record as a rural municipal leader, it would appear that neither Aikins nor Crerar held any public office prior to their initial election to the House of Commons (although both had had distinguished and recognized "professional" careers in "public life"). Brandon area voters obviously did not consider previous political experience to be a prerequisite for federal political candidates.

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[14] It must, however, be remembered that some incumbents may have been "saved" from defeat by a decision to retire: one suspects, at least, that had Coldwell stood in 1915; Whidden in 1921; and Forke in 1930; the list of unsuccessful incumbents might have been lengthier.

[15] The experienced--but unsuccessful--eleven included A.C. Fraser, J.W. Fleming, James Kirkcaldy, H. Cater, H. Spafford, D.E. Clement, Dr. H.O. McDiarmid, Fred Young, Peter McDuffe, W.R. Webb and G.R. Rowe. One suspects that the party strategists who were attempting to defeat incumbent M.L.A.'s preferred to nominate successful municipal politicians who would, presumably, have already "established a name for themselves."

Furthermore, a candidate's record of achievement (or failure) has proved not to be a reliable criteria by which to anticipate the results should he seek office at a "higher" level. While the example of Harry Cater who was an abnormally dismal failure at the provincial level despite an unequalled "success" record as mayor most immediately comes to mind, the rather bizarre career of George Dinsdale who suffered two embarrassing municipal defeats in the 1920s[17] prior to winning election as a Conservative M.L.A. in 1932 (at a time when his party's representation was actually diminishing in number) must also be remembered! The history of "labour" in Brandon politics also appears to substantiate the theory that success at one "level" did not necessarily lead to success at another. Certainly, the Independent Labor Party's aldermanic "gains" in the 1927-32 era did not result in

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16. Adams, Coldwell, Clement, Dinsdale, Johnson and McDorman had all served in some capacity at the municipal level, school board included.

17. Dinsdale failed to win re-election as mayor in 1921 and, subsequently, he failed to secure re-election as alderman in 1927.

an increased vote provincially or federally. Indeed, it would appear that A.E. Smith's provincial victory in 1920 may actually have detrimentally affected his party's fortunes municipally as the "anti-Smith" forces, who were frightened and, thus, stimulated by "labour's" success, exerted an even greater--and effective--effort in the ensuing elections. It has also been noted that Brandon provincial Liberals--justifiably or not--complained in 1899 that dissatisfaction with the Laurier government was hurting their cause locally. That there was some inter-relationship between the different levels of politics was true: it was the manner in which politics locally was affected by that inter-relationship that was surprising.[18]

Nevertheless, the most predominant characteristic of politics in Brandon--Manitoba's "second city"--was the undeniable tendency towards "ministerialist" voting. The "ministerialist" or government candidate was successful in twenty-two of the thirty-one contests under examination.[19] Furthermore, there were an additional three instances in which the victor was a virtual (but undeclared) government supporter.[20] Consequently, Brandon voters elected an "opposition" member in only six instances, including the election in 1921 of Robert Forke who never fully emerged as a determined critic of the Mackenzie King government. Brandon electors were either normally "in step" with public opinion or they were consciously seeking to be "on the winning side." While one suspects that both explanations were valid to a degree, Brandonites were certainly conscious of the fact that they, as residents of Manitoba's "second city," deserved to be represented in cabinet and, consequently, to share in the "goodies" of politics. That meant, however, that their city had to be represented on the "right" side of the house. While it is impossible to measure the extent of this "ministerialist" desire, this notable tendency to be "in step" with "the majority" was probably particularily significant in certain instances where seemingly weak candidates may have won election on the strength of this "tide of public opinion." For example, one suspects that Dr. S.W. McInnis and Dr. H.P. Whidden--to some degree--owed their elections to this pattern of "ministerialist" voting. S.E. Clement, who lost in 1914 to a Conservative "ministerialist" candidate only to win in 1915 after he had become the "ministerialist" candidate, was surely a most definite beneficiary of this voting pattern. In other instances such as in 1925 and 1926 when Dave Beaubier captured the city--but not the constituency--and in 1932 and 1936 when Dinsdale won the city (and, thus, the provincial constituency), there is some evidence to indicate that the somewhat surprising success of both these Conservative candidates can be *partially* attributed to the fact that some voters--persuaded perhaps by the pro-Conservative *Brandon Daily Sun*[21]--had mistakenly concluded that the Conservatives were going to form the next government!

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[18] It is interesting to note that Brandon only infrequently was represented both provincially and federally by the same party. While this was the case as the study began in 1899, there were only three relatively short "time-periods"--i.e., 1911-1915; 1932-38; and 1945-49--during which that pattern re-appeared. It should also be noted that there were many apparent disadvantages for the party that was in power at both levels simultaneously.

[19] Admittedly, the 1941 provincial election results were less significant to this analysis as both candidates were supporters of the Bracken coalition government.

[20] While Edmison, the "Fusionist" or Independent candidate, never fully identified himself as a government supporter, one could legitimately classify him as such. The election of Robert Forke in 1925 is similar example.

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[21] Certainly many political commentators, as noted previously, believed that newspaper support was politically significant. It is important to remember that the *Sun* was the only daily newspaper regularly published in Brandon after 1913.

Another predominant feature of politics in Brandon was the political significance of the personal strength of the individual candidate. For example, Alderman Harry Spafford won frequent re-election while fellow I.L.P. aldermanic candidates, who polled several hundred fewer votes, regularly suffered defeat. Harry Cater, who became virtually an institution in Brandon's municipal history in the 1920s, undoubtedly owed much of his success to the personal following of some 2,000-2,200 voters which he had developed. David Beaubier's success in winning Brandon itself in 1925 and 1926 in spite of a pro-Forke or pro-Liberal trend elsewhere in the constituency--as well as in the nation in 1926--can surely be partially explained in terms of the popularity of this well-known city resident who was opposing a rather uninspiring farmer from Pipestone. Beaubier's remarkable success in surviving the 1935 "Tory debacle" is an even more dramatic example of the significance of his personal political appeal and his extra-ordinary effort. As Tories "fell like ten pins" elsewhere, this man survived the challenge of the same Liberal opponent (J.E. Matthews) who would capture the constituency three years later--after David Beaubier's death--and who would subsequently control the riding with little difficulty until his own death. As the Sun remained as a Conservative supporter throughout those many elections, the difference between the Conservative victory in 1935 and the Liberal gain in 1938 must lie largely in the personal political strength of David Beaubier and its subsequent absence.[22] George Dinsdale's first two "successes" at the provincial level--at a time when he was a member of the opposition--presumably were partially due to his personal appeal as a candidate. At least, the fears which were frequently expressed by local Conservatives that the seat would be lost should he no longer be the candidate would attest to this fact.

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[22] While it can be argued that those who wished to vote "ministerialist" would obviously have no difficulty in determining their choice in the 1938 by-election, that must be almost equally true for 1935 as well.

On the other hand, A.E. Smith's election as a Dominion Labor Party candidate in 1920 can only be partially explained by the above noted factors. Certainly, Smith's support could not be interpreted as a "ministerialist" vote as "labour" had no hope of achieving power in 1920 and he did not have any significant local newspaper support.[23] Instead, Smith's success can be attributed to the class consciousness aroused by the 1919 strikes; his own personal appeal; and a "divided opposition." Perhaps the latter factor was crucial as Smith was defeated in 1922--after his opponents had reunited against him.[24] Dr. Dwight Johnson's success in 1943 was seemingly a combination of several local and national factors. While a vote for Johnson was clearly not a "ministerialist" vote, it must be remembered that his November 1943 victory coincided almost exactly with the "peaking" of the CCF strength throughout Canada. Thus, those wartime conditions that gave rise to the sudden "growth" of the CCF in several provinces presumably affected these provincial election results in Brandon in 1943 as well. However, the fact that the CCF could seemingly have held the provincial seat again in 1945--had their vote not been divided between two candidates--suggests that their strength provincially exceeded that of the federal

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23. Admittedly, the "labour" movement published The Confederate--whose editor may have been A.E. Smith--for a brief period of time.

24. The significance of the "divided opposition" should not be exaggerated, however, as there was several "three-way" contests in which "Labour" candidates were not successful.

CCF party for whom 1945 was a "disappointing" year.[25] Furthermore, one suspects that Johnson's own personal appeal was a factor of some consequence, a view that is shared by some of his contemporaries. The most evident "local" factor, however, was the costly division within the CCF in the Brandon riding. Had it not been for this peculiar circumstance, surely Leslie H. McDorman--the "ministerialist" candidate--would not have been elected in 1945.[26]

Thus, the obvious tendency of Brandon electors to be "in step" with majority opinion--i.e., to vote "ministerialist"--on most occasions was only one of several political factors--namely, the personal appeal or effectiveness of a particular candidate; the ability of a local constituency organization "to deliver" the vote;[27] internal "factional" disputes that could fatally divide the party locally; the influence of the local press; and the varying (and usually immeasurable) interrelationships that existed with other levels of politics--that affected and even determined results in Brandon itself from 1899 to 1949.[28] To ignore such local factors--and the implication that Brandon (and, presumably, other communities) was, to a significant degree, a political unit unto itself from 1899 to 1949--would be to risk ignoring the essence of politics.

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[25] The CCF had the support of 29% of the committed voters, according to the Gallup polls, in late 1943. However, the CCF polled only 15.6% of the total vote in the 1945 federal election. Beck, Pendulum of Power, 257. The Manitoba CCF were more successful as their numbers rose from five to ten M.L.A.'s as a result of the 1945 provincial election. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1947. The results in Brandon were comparable as the CCF polled 32.93% (or 36.05% if the Labor-Progressive vote is included) of the city vote federally in 1945 while the two "CCF" candidates received 50.92% of the Brandon provincial vote in 1945.

[26] Note that an internal "factional" dispute within local Conservative ranks may also have cost T.M. Daly the seat and ensured Sifton's reelection in 1908.

[27] As the candidate who receives the largest number of votes actually cast wins the election, an effective "get out the vote" election day organization could spell the difference between success and failure. As noted previously, several Brandon Liberals explained Adam's defeat in 1899 in terms of a failure "to get out the vote." It is also interesting to note that Beaubier polled 7,101 votes in 1926 (as compared with Forke's 8,267). Had he secured that same total in October 1925 (when he only received 5,428 votes), he could have won the constituency (as Forke had then only polled 6,411 votes). A similar example occurred in several of the aldermanic by-elections in the late 1920s when I.L.P. candidates were able, by polling their "core" strength, to capitalize upon the fact that the "less-dedicated" masses simply failed to go to the polls. Thus, Wm. Hill could win a by-election where there was a relatively small response but he lost the annual election when a larger number of voters responded.

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[28] It is intriguing to note that there were singularly few local references to party leadership as a factor in the politics of this constituency.

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[1] While the "names" of individual newspapers were altered slightly on occasions, the "name" cited is that by which the newspaper was most generally known.

[2] The Brandon Weekly Sun, a condensation of the week's daily editions, was read in those few instances when the daily edition was unavailable.

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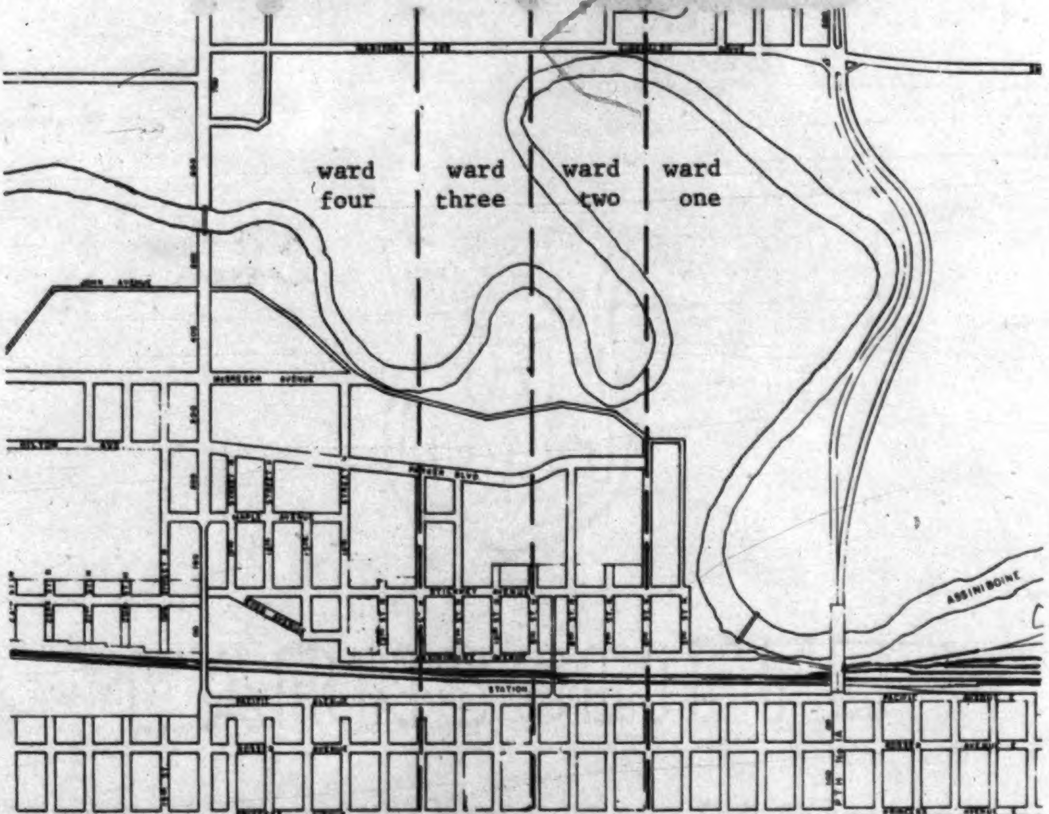
Appendix One

Ward Boundaries; to 1904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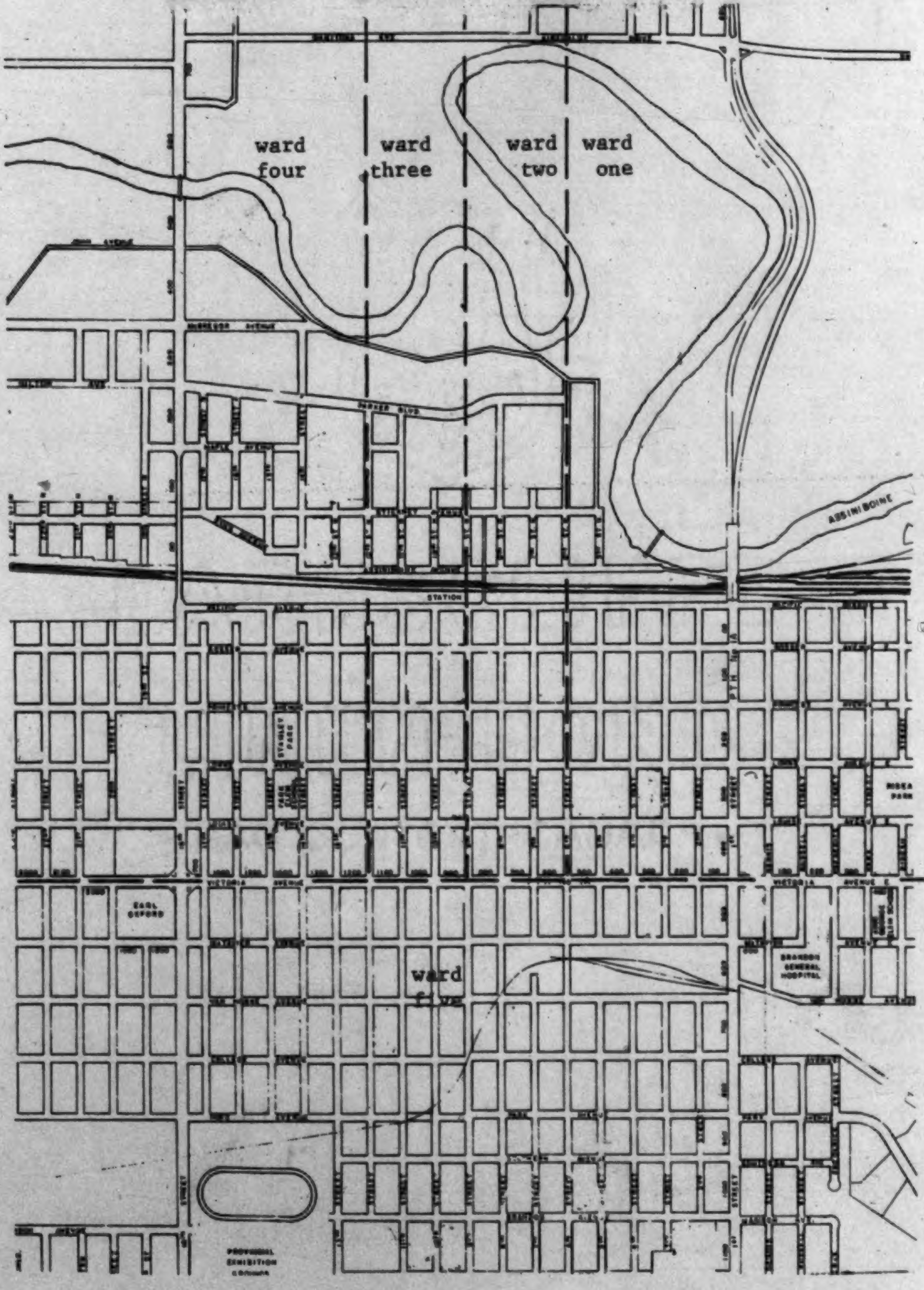
P.T.H. No. 1A
BRANDON GENERAL HOSPITAL
PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION

Appendix Two

Ward Boundaries: 1905-15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VICTORIA AVENUE
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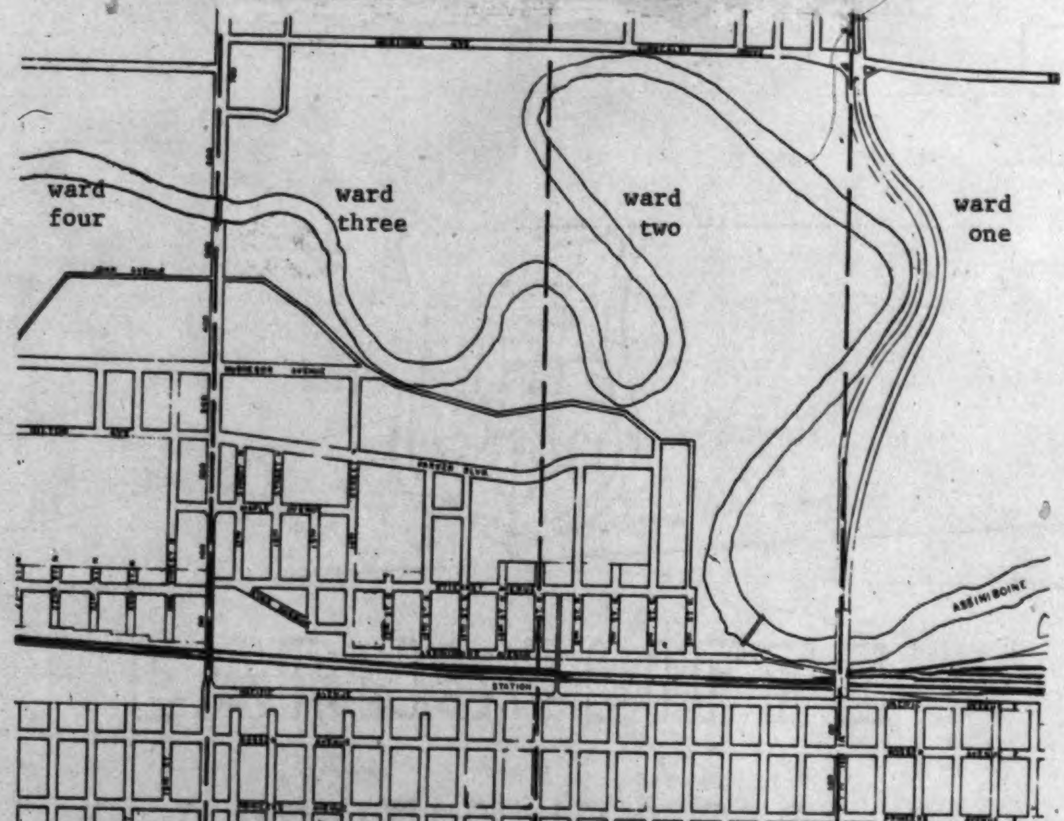
BRANDON GENERAL HOSPITAL
RIDEAU PARK
PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION GROUNDS

Appendix Three

Ward Boundaries: 1916-22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ASSINIBOINE
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VICTORIA AVENUE
STANLEY PARK
EARL OXFORD
RIDEAU PARK
BRANDON GENERAL HOSPITAL
PROVINCIAL EXHIBITION GROUNDS

Appendix Four

Brandon Mayoralty Election Results [1]

1899	Dr. John McDiarmid (L) *	Acclamation [2]
1900	A.C. Fraser (L)	461
	John Hanbury (C)	454
1901	A.C. Fraser (L) *	Acclamation
1902	J.W. Fleming (L)	520 [3]
	Fred Nation (C)	416
Feb. 1903 (by-election)	Robert Hall (L)	476
	John Hanbury (C)	392
1903	Robert Hall (L) *	Acclamation
1904	J.W. Fleming (L) *	Acclamation
1905	J.W. Fleming (L) *	955
	Dr. John McDiarmid (L)	319
1906	S.E. Clement (L)	498
	Dr. W.L. Harcourt (L)	186
1907	S.E. Clement (L) *	905
	R.D. Evans (C)	468
1908	H.L. Adolph (L)	884
	S.C. Doran (C)	649
1909	H.L. Adolph (L) *	Acclamation
1910	J.W. Fleming (L)	872
	B.D. Wallace (C)	787
	R.D. Evans (C)	103
1911	J.W. Fleming (L) *	Acclamation
1912	J.W. Fleming (L) *	1,228
	J.H. Hughes	689

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[1] Political affiliation of candidate identified were known--e.g., Liberal (L) or Conservative (C). Also, the incumbent candidate, wherever such exists, is identified by an asterisk--i.e., *.

[2] Mayoralty election results cited are those provided by the local newspaper of the day.

[3] Fleming subsequently resigned when it was discovered that he had unknowingly contravened the regulations.

1913	J.H. Hughes	1,243
	H.W. Cater	1,085
1914	H.W. Cater	1,590
	J.A. McDonald	860
1915	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1916	H.W. Cater *	1,131
	J.F. Fisher	481
1917	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1918	A.R. McDiarmid (L)	961
	H.W. Cater *	755
1919	George Dinsdale (C)	1,068
	H.W. Cater	995
1920	George Dinsdale (C) *	Acclamation
1921	H.W. Cater	1,711
	George Dinsdale (C) *	1,638
1922	H.W. Cater *	2,035
	George Dinsdale (C)	1,519
1923	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1924	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1925	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1926	H.W. Cater *	2,018
	Dr. H.O. McDiarmid (L)	1,464
1927	H.W. Cater *	2,006 [4]
	D.E. Clement (L)	1,857
Feb. 1928 (by-election)	H.W. Cater *	2,178
	H.L. Patmore	998
1928	H.W. Cater *	2,267
	F.H. Young (C)	1,687
1929	H.W. Cater *	Acclamation
1930	H.W. Cater *	2,490
	F.R. Longworth (C)	1,592

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[4] These elections results were declared invalid due to a minor contravention of the Municipal Act.

1931	Ed Fotheringham	4,033
	H.W. Cater *	2,358
1932	Ed Fotheringham *	Acclamation
1933	H.W. Cater	3,124 [5]
	F.H. Young (C)	2,491
1935	H.W. Cater *	2,369
	James Giddings	829
1937	F.H. Young (C)	2,095
	H.W. Cater *	1,300
	Dr. P.C. Hughes	765
1939	F.H. Young (C) *	3,145
	James Kirkcaldy (C)	1,373
	H.W. Cater	645
1941	F.H. Young (C) *	Acclamation
1943	L.H. McDorman (L)	2,194
	Frank Williamson (C)	2,169
1945	Frank Williamson (C)	2,543
	F.H. Young (C)	2,046
1947	Frank Williamson (C) *	3,770
	F.H. Young (C)	1,709
	James Kirkcaldy (C)	374
1949	Frank Williamson (C) *	Acclamation

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[5] The mayor, as of 1933, was now elected for a two-year term.

Appendix Five

Provincial Election Results in Brandon (City) Constituency[1]

January 15, 1896	C. Adams, (L)[2]	501[3]
	Kelly, (C)	402
December 7, 1899	Dr. S.W. McInnis, (C)	569
	C. Adams, (L) *	561
July 20, 1903	Dr. S.W. McInnis, (C) *	765
	A.C. Fraser, (L)	723
March 7, 1907	Dr. S.W. McInnis, (C) *	1,210
	J.W. Fleming, (L)	1,081
November 19, 1907 (by-election)	G.R. Coldwell, (C)	Acclamation
July 11, 1910	G.R. Coldwell, (C) *	1,402
	S.H. McKay, (L)	1,150
July 10, 1914	G.R. Coldwell, (C) *	1,897
	S.E. Clement, (L)	1,734
September 16, 1915	S.E. Clement, (L)	1,914
	J.A.M. Aikins, (Ind C)	1,213
June 29, 1920	A.E. Smith,(D.L.P.)	2,007
	S.E. Clement, (L)	1,403
	J. Kirkcaldy,(Ind)	1,245
July 18, 1922	Dr. J.H. Edmison,(Ind)	3,281
	A.E. Smith, (D.L.P.)	2,060
June 28, 1927	Dr. J.H. Edmison, (Ind) *	3,526
	W. Hill, (I.L.P.)	1,288
	H.W. Cater, (Ind)	489

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1. The incumbent candidate, if any, is identified with an asterisk--i.e.,*.

2. Political affiliation identified as follows: Conservative (C); Liberal (L); Liberal-Progressive (L-P); Independent (Ind); Dominion Labor Party (D.L.P.); Independent Labor Party (I.L.P.); Independent Conservative (Ind C); Independent CCF (Ind CCF); Government (G); Liberal-Progressive coalitionist (L-P coal); Official Opposition (OO); Conservative coalitionist (C coal); and CCF.

3. The vote totals are those provided by the several relevant editions of the Canadian Parliamentary Guide. Although local newspaper reports occasionally published totals that varied by a few votes, any discrepancies are insufficient to alter--in any manner--the basic conclusions of the thesis.

		First	Second	Third[4]
June 16, 1932	G. Dinsdale, (C)	2,647	2,758	3,021
	H. Spafford, (I.L.P.)	1,574	1,824	2,192
	D.E. Clement (L-P)	1,423	1,555	
	H.W. Cater (Ind)	893		
		First	Second[5]	
July 27, 1936	G. Dinsdale, (C) *	2,647	2,974	
	Dr. H.O. McDiarmid (L-P)	2,042	2,204	
	H. Spafford (CCF)	1,300		
April 22, 1941	G. Dinsdale (C coal) *			3,285
	Dr. H.O. McDiarmid (L coal)			2,921
November 18, 1943 (by-election)	Dr. D.L. Johnson (CCF) F.H. Young (G)			3,722 3,204
		First	Second	
October 15, 1945	L.H. McDorman (L-P)	3,088	3,288	
	P. McDuffe (OO)	1,650	2,046	
	Dr. D.L. Johnson (Ind CCF) *	1,554		
November 10, 1949	J.C. Donaldson (C coal)			3,743
	G.R. Rowe (L coal)			1,933
	W.R. Webb (CCF)			1,478

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4. The second and third count totals are those published in the local newspaper. Brandon Daily Sun, June 18, 1932. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide did not provide these totals.

5. The second count total is that published by the local newspaper. Brandon Daily Sun, October 18, 1945. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide did not, in this instance, provide "second count" totals.

Appendix Six

Federal Election Results of Brandon Constituency [1]

November 27, 1896 (by-election)	C. Sifton, [2] (L) [3]			Acclamation [4]
November 7, 1900	C. Sifton, (L) *			5,011
	H.J. Macdonald,(C)			4,342
November 3, 1904	C. Sifton, (L) *			3,625
	R.L. Richardson, (Ind)			2,804
October 26, 1908	C. Sifton, (L) *			3,565
	T.M. Daly,(C)			3,496
	B.D. Wallace, (Ind C)			101
September 21, 1911	J.A.M. Aikins, (C)			4,436
	A.E. Hill, (L)			3,570
		Civil	Military	Total
December 17, 1917	Dr. H.P. Whidden,(U)	9,340	2,125	11,465
	H.S. Paterson, (L-L)	1,237	92	1,329
December 6, 1921	R. Forke, (P)			9,596
	C.E. Ivens, (C)			4,067
	F.C. Cox, (L)			404
October 29, 1925	R. Forke, (P) *			6,411
	D.W. Beaubier,(C)			5,428
September 14, 1926	R. Forke, (L-P) *			8,267
	D.W. Beaubier, (C)			7,101
February 5, 1930 (by-election)	T.A. Crerar, (L-P)			Acclamation

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1. The federal constituency of Brandon was established under the Re-distribution Act of 1892. It was altered in 1903.

2. The incumbent candidate, if any, is identified with an asterisk--i.e., *.

3. Political affiliation identified as follows: Conservative (C); Liberal (L); Independent (Ind); Independent Conservative (Ind C); Unionist (U); "Laurier" Liberal (L-L); Progressive (P); Liberal-Progressive (L-P); Labor (Lab); Reconstructionist (R); National Government (NG); Labor-Progressive (Lab-P); and CCF.

4. The vote totals are those provided by the several relevant editions of the Canadian Parliamentary Guide. Although local newspapers occasionally published totals that varied slightly, any discrepancies are insufficient to alter--in any manner--the basic conclusions of the thesis.

July 28, 1930	D.W. Beaubier,(C)	8,512
	T.A. Crerar,(L) *	6,457
	B. Brigden,(Lab)	1,331
October 14, 1935	D.W. Beaubier,(C) *	6,575
	J.E. Matthews,(L)	6,368
	H. Wood,(CCF)	3,396
	C. Leech,(R)	556
November 14, 1938	J.E. Matthews,(L)	6,580
(by-election)	G. Beaubier,(C)	5,600
	H. Wood,(CCF)	3,577
March 26, 1940	J.E. Matthews,(L)*	8,908
	J.W. Thompson,(NG)	6,168
	H. Wood,(CCF)	2,609
June 11, 1945	J.E. Matthews,(L)*	6,870
	F.H. Young,(C)	5,621
	A. Brown,(CCF)	5,294
	A.E. Smith,(L-P)	497
June 27, 1949	J.E. Matthews,(L)*	11,263
	J. Bracken,(C)	7,150
	D.L. Johnson,(Ind)	1,964